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February 24, 2021

The Honorable Tom Wolf  
Governor  
Commonwealth of Pennsylvania  
Room 225  
Main Capitol Building  
Harrisburg, PA 17120

Ms. Alison Beam  
Acting Secretary  
PA Department of Health  
8<sup>th</sup> Floor West  
Health & Welfare Building  
Harrisburg, PA 17120

Dear Governor Wolf and Acting Health Secretary Beam,

It was with relief and excitement that I learned that a state-supported Covid-19 vaccine registry is under development in Pennsylvania. While I understand that these platforms have not been without their own problems in other states, I feel strongly that such a system will help provide the transparency and order so desperately needed to get our Commonwealth on a path to a return to normalcy.

I have heard from countless frustrated constituents, for whom the process of getting a vaccine for themselves and loved ones has exacerbated an already stressful situation. Again and again, I have heard that simply having an opportunity to “get in line,” even if they are not currently eligible for the vaccine, will allow Pennsylvanians to patiently wait their turn to receive it.

With such a complex, high stakes undertaking in the works, I am writing to highlight some of the priorities that I believe will help set up a registry system for success.

--The registry point of contact will be an important opportunity to address vaccine hesitancy by tying in educational resources and opportunities to ask questions, via chatbots and training for live operators.

--An effective registry must be accessible by disabled individuals, those without access to the internet and non-English speakers. The phrasing must be easy to understand across cultures and education levels.

--Although time is short, it is vital that local community organizations have input in plans to develop and publicize a registry program. Ultimately, listening to the people on the ground will save time and increase efficiency.

The sky-high demand for Covid-19 vaccines is great news for our communities – a year and a half ago, we were battling measles outbreaks because of growing mistrust of the modern miracle of inoculation. The use of a registry system will bring order and transparency to the process, and allow us to clearly see and respond to the communities that need more outreach.

We know that for many, the urgency to get the vaccine is paramount, and they simply want to know that they will be able to get the vaccine. This is a large part of the population, many of whom are tech savvy and looking for the tools to sign up. A registry is a perfect solution to help organize and manage the anxiety and urgency of these individuals.

I'm grateful that the Department of Health has attempted to prioritize those Pennsylvanians who may be less tech-savvy, and also less enthusiastic about getting in line for the vaccine. We need a complementary strategy with Medicaid managed care organizations, behavioral health managed care organizations who know their members encouraging vaccine access. One high-touch way to do this might be to utilize peer supports and other mental health professionals as trusted advisors in making connections to vaccinations.

Thank you for your ongoing commitment to protecting the health and safety of Pennsylvanians – an effort that has never been more challenging than it is now.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Dan B. Frankel". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large initial "D" and "F".

Dan B. Frankel  
Democratic Chair  
House Health Committee