

THE COUNCIL OF THE
CITY OF NEW YORK

January 7, 2021

Commissioner David Chokshi, MD
NYC Department of Health and Mental Hygiene
42-09 28th Street, 14th Floor
Long Island City, NY 11101

Dear Commissioner Chokshi:

We write today to urge the New York City Department of Health and Mental Hygiene to expand the pre-registration system for the COVID-19 vaccine. While we are grateful that the work to vaccinate medical workers as part of the first phase is ongoing, many of our constituents eagerly await news about subsequent phases. Allowing for pre-registration for the COVID-19 vaccine would both ease concerns about the complex phasing for availability and create a more efficient method of distribution to the general public.

The myriad restrictions imposed by New York State on vaccine distribution are complicated, and while that may be necessary to accomplish the ideal vaccination plan, the various categories are difficult for the average New Yorker to follow. The confusion that could potentially be created by shifting criteria for who qualifies as a frontline essential worker and what constitutes an underlying health condition is avoidable if we open this line of communication directly to New Yorkers now. Depending on the narrowness of those definitions, millions of New York City residents could qualify for vaccination earlier instead of having to wait. All New Yorkers should be able to submit their information for pre-registration right now to help avoid the system being overwhelmed when eligibility expands.

Other local governments, like those in Chicago and New Mexico, have already implemented a system where residents can pre-register for the vaccine. The Cook County Department of Public Health has created an Individual Vaccination Registration Form, which aims to “to gather information from individuals who would like to receive regular updates about when and where they can receive the COVID-19 vaccination.”¹ The New Mexico Department of Health registration form² pledges that they will contact individuals when they are able to make an appointment depending on the medical and occupational data collected.

Given the complexity, importance, and scale of the task facing New York City, a COVID-19 vaccination pre-registration system could prove to be a vital tool during what will hopefully be

¹ <https://redcap.dph.illinois.gov/surveys/?s=PP8PJNFHMW>

² <https://cgvaccine.nmhealth.org/>

the end of this pandemic. Streamlining the information from the City to New Yorkers could also help make appointments for vaccinations and, critically, simplify the process of administering the second dose of the vaccine to ensure its effectiveness. A full pre-registration system could also allow New Yorkers to learn what will be required to certify their eligibility. If medical documentation is required to qualify as having an underlying health condition, millions of New Yorkers could be trying to get notes from their doctors simultaneously. Beginning that process now is critical for vaccinating as efficiently as possible.

We thank you for your efforts on behalf of all New Yorkers. This unique moment in history has challenged our city in ways many of us could not have fathomed but we are grateful for your leadership during this crisis. We look forward to continuing discussions on this matter as the vaccination process moves forward.

Sincerely,

Handwritten signature of Keith Powers in black ink.

Keith Powers
Council Member, District 4

Handwritten signature of Mark Levine in black ink.

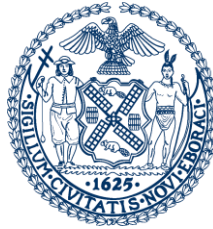
Mark Levine
Council Member, District 7
Chair, Committee on Health

KEITH POWERS

COUNCIL MEMBER, 4TH DISTRICT

211 East 43rd Street, Suite 1205
New York, NY 10017
Tel: (212)818-0580

250 Broadway, Room 1815
New York, NY 10007
Tel: (212)788-7393



**THE COUNCIL OF THE
CITY OF NEW YORK**

CHAIR

Criminal Justice

COMMITTEES

Economic Development

Finance

Government Operations

Health

Oversight & Investigations

Public Safety