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January 19, 2021

General Gustavo Perna
Chief Operation Officer
Operation Warp Speed

Dear General Perna,

I must first commend you, your staff, and your private partners for your expedient and successful efforts to develop safe and highly effective vaccines for COVID-19. This scientific breakthrough will save thousands of lives and bring an end to the pandemic that is a public health as well as an economic crisis. The development of the COVID-19 vaccines within a year of the disease's emergence is an unprecedented achievement, and couldn't have come a moment too soon. The promise of widespread vaccinations has brought hope at a time when infection rates are climbing and hospital capacity is shrinking; we must work swiftly to ensure that hope becomes a reality.

While Operation Warp Speed (OWS)'s efforts around vaccine development have been extraordinarily successful and expedient, I write to you today regarding the dire need for an increase in supply of those vaccines for my home state of Kansas. Vaccine distribution under enormous public pressure poses serious logistical and communication challenges to our state and local public health departments, but what they need more than anything else is simply more doses of the Moderna and Pfizer vaccines. Kansans have shown enormous excitement and eagerness to do their part to end the pandemic and receive the COVID-19 vaccine, but our public health departments are stymied by the lack of supply. I encourage you to explore purchasing additional doses from Pfizer and Moderna to speed up the rate of distribution, which is far behind original estimates. Additionally, I urge you to prepare to utilize the Defense Production Act (DPA) if the vaccine manufacturers encounter trouble in production. The federal government must do everything in its power to maintain and increase our vaccine supply, and I urge you to keep Congress and governors regularly informed as to the challenges we face. As the emergency use authorizations for additional vaccines are granted, I encourage you to keep these current shortfalls in mind and to do everything possible to ensure the acquisition of enough vaccine to meet demand.

I am especially concerned by last week's announcement that OWS does not in fact have reserve doses to release to states. Soon Kansas will move from prioritizing health care workers and residents and staff of long-term care facilities to vaccinating seniors and essential workers. During this and future phases, state and local health departments will shoulder even more of the responsibility for vaccinating the public. It is critical that our state not only receive far more vaccine doses, but also that the state and local public health departments receive greater foresight

into coming policies, guidance, and vaccine shipments. As the distribution continues to scale up, it is critical that our public health departments have as much clarity as possible on what they can expect and prepare for in the coming weeks. Executing efficient and organized vaccine distribution requires clear communication and the opportunity to coordinate with state and local partners in advance of a single week, as public health departments are simultaneously conducting still-critical testing and tracing efforts. Greater transparency and insight into the state allocation plans will only help them continue these robust efforts.

Additionally, state and local governments have very little insight into the Pharmacy Partnership for Long-Term Care Program and its progress in their communities. Federal, state, and local officials need to know the status of this program and its efforts to vaccinate long-term care facilities to ensure that the program is running smoothly, and that no facility is left unvaccinated.

Finally, I strongly encourage you to collaborate fully with President-Elect Biden's transition team and within the new Administration to ensure that there is no lapse in vaccine distribution during the change in leadership. The fight to end the COVID-19 pandemic is absolutely critical to the livelihood and well-being of each of my constituents in the Kansas Third District, and we cannot allow this national effort to slow down. Your service in both administrations will ensure continuity of this all-important work, and I ask that you ensure that departing OWS staff prepare the new administration so that they have all the information necessary to continue and build on your efforts to vaccinate the country.

Above all, I implore you to do everything in your power to significantly upscale production of the Moderna and Pfizer vaccines and provide as much insight as possible to state and local partners who are largely responsible for administering the vaccines to their communities. Congress has much more work to do to support these efforts as well, and I have long pushed for funding for state and local governments to ensure their financial stability and their ability to conduct widespread testing, tracing, and vaccinations. But what I hear from my constituents and from state and local public health experts is that above all, Kansas needs more vaccine doses, and that they stand ready and waiting to administer them as quickly as possible. I look forward to continuing to work with you and support your vaccine distribution efforts under President-elect Biden's administration, and eagerly await your response.

Sincerely,



Sharice L. Davids
MEMBER OF CONGRESS