

**Congress of the United States**  
**Washington, DC 20515**

March 9, 2021

The Honorable Andrew M. Cuomo  
Governor of New York State  
NYS State Capitol Building  
Albany, N.Y. 12224

Commissioner Howard Zucker, M.D.  
New York State Department of Health  
Corning Tower, Empire State Plaza  
Albany, N.Y. 12237

Dear Governor Cuomo and Commissioner Zucker,

I write to reiterate and formalize the concerns I have shared with you and your staff over the past two months regarding the lack of a COVID-19 vaccination center in Rockland County. As you are aware, Rockland County has been hit especially hard by COVID-19. Since the pandemic began, there have been over 39,800 positive cases of COVID-19 in the County, and as of March 9, 2021, 694 Rocklanders have died due to the pandemic.<sup>1</sup> The public health emergency in Rockland County has been particularly acute since the pandemic began and remains so today. Over 12% of county residents have tested positive for COVID-19 since the start of the pandemic, the highest positivity rate of any county in all of New York State.<sup>1</sup> Despite the high concentration of COVID-19 cases in the county and the announcement this week of 10 new vaccination sites being added across the state, Rockland inexplicably remains without a mass vaccination site.

While Rockland County residents are able to make appointments at some of the mass vaccination sites located in surrounding counties, and many residents have done so, the lack of a Rockland County vaccination site creates an additional barrier for those residents already suffering the most as a result of the pandemic. Black, brown, low-income, elderly, and disabled residents of Rockland County are most in need of COVID-19 vaccinations and the least likely to access a vaccination site located in another county. Rockland County, for example, is 63% white, 18% Hispanic, 11% Black, and 6% Asian<sup>2</sup>, yet 84% of individuals in the County who have received the vaccine are white.<sup>3</sup>

I have heard from constituents across Rockland County who have been eligible for a vaccine since Phase 1a of the vaccine rollout, but who cannot make or access a vaccination appointment. As one resident shared, "I am a 67 years old senior living in Rockland County, N.Y. who has been 'left behind' in the effort to find a COVID-19 vaccine distribution center which is open, granting appointments, and not restricted by zip code." This sentiment has been shared time and again by residents of Rockland County, particularly by seniors with limited transportation options as a result of the pandemic or other factors outside of their control.

<sup>1</sup><https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2020/us/coronavirus-us-cases.html#states>

<sup>2</sup><https://datausa.io/profile/geo/rockland-county-ny#demographics>

<sup>3</sup><https://covid19vaccine.health.ny.gov/vaccine-demographic-data>

Members of our community should not have to jump through hoops or travel long distances to keep themselves and their families safe. As vaccine supply increases due to assistance from the federal government and we have the opportunity to vaccinate more New Yorkers, accessible vaccination sites in communities that have been hardest hit by COVID-19 become all the more important. Thank you in advance for your help. I am grateful for your attention to this matter as we continue to fight the COVID-19 pandemic and work to keep our communities safe and healthy.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Mondaire Jones". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Mondaire Jones  
Member of Congress