

An Open Letter to Governor Gavin Newsom and Paul Markovich, CEO, Blue Shield

PHARMACISTS ARE CALIFORNIA'S SOLUTION TO A SUSTAINABLE COVID-19 VACCINATION STRATEGY

As California embarks with Blue Shield on designing a strategy for COVID-19 vaccination we, the undersigned, ask that community and neighborhood pharmacy be included as part of the essential network for vaccine allocations.

As the most trusted and accessible healthcare provider, pharmacists and student pharmacists have been highly regarded as immunization experts for California's diverse population. Californians' trust their pharmacist to administer vaccinations in a variety of healthcare settings, which include health systems, clinics, community pharmacies, long-term care facilities, and temporary mass vaccination sites. In rural and urban settings alike, pharmacists and student pharmacists are trusted to provide for the day-to-day care for all populations, including high risk and underserved populations throughout the state. As a profession, pharmacists, student pharmacists and pharmacy technicians are the long-term solution to a sustainable COVID-19 vaccination strategy.

Most Californians live within five miles of a local pharmacy and see their pharmacist on a frequent basis. To achieve vaccination equity, it is essential that these 4,000 access points that include independent, chain and supermarket pharmacies are used as immunization hubs to increase the volume of vaccinations. Vaccinations delivered in the neighborhood pharmacy lessen transportation barriers, language barriers, technology barriers, and increase hours of availability for patients with a trusted and familiar health care provider. To achieve an equitable distribution of the vaccine, patients without access to computers or the internet can connect directly with their local pharmacy, not needing to learn how to navigate an online portal or registration system, to schedule appointments using the familiar process that they use for flu shots.

Pharmacists understand community and patient specific needs, and in many cases already have a patient's demographic and medical information. They also have the training to address the priority of vaccine hesitancy. Trusted pharmacists, with long standing relationships with patients, are well equipped to educate and answer questions and concerns. Pharmacists ensure both patient safety and compliance with state laws and regulations and are already trained in reporting vaccine administrations to the California Immunization Registry (CAIR).

Pharmacists stand ready to serve as the sustainable solution for efficiently administering the COVID-19 vaccine.

Sincerely,

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About CPhA

The California Pharmacists Association (CPhA) is the largest statewide professional association for pharmacists, student pharmacists, and pharmacy technicians in the country. CPhA represents the pharmacy profession in all practice settings and promotes the health of the public through the practice of pharmacy. For more information, visit www.cpha.com.



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