

State of
Washington
House of
Representatives



January 15, 2021

Umair A. Shah, MD, MPH
Secretary, Washington Department of Health

Via e-mail

Dear Secretary Shah,

The novel-coronavirus (COVID-19) has been raging through our community since early Spring 2020 and in fact, our local rates have alarmingly almost tripled in the last few weeks. Our communities have faced significant physical, emotional, and economic hardship. The grief and loss in our community is palpable. And with the approval of the vaccine, our community was starting to feel a sense of relief and an end in sight to this seemingly never-ending pandemic. However, the distribution of the vaccine has proven to be a confusing, inconsistent process.

As a newly elected legislator in the 42nd legislative district, I can think of nothing more important to prioritize than asking the Department of Health to clearly state their COVID-19 vaccination plan for Washingtonians in a meaningful and understandable manner. Every citizen deserves to know specifically: when, how, and where they can access the vaccine.

I appreciate all the work that the department has done on the Washington State COVID-19 Vaccination Plan and have read the information on your web site and watched the videos. However, I still don't understand how it will actually work on the ground for my constituents. Now that the vaccine is here (or soon will be), we need more detail. I am hoping that you can provide more detail in the following areas.

- How does my community receive vaccines? Through the local health department? Hospitals? Providers? From whom?
- How will my constituents know when they are eligible? Will they be contacted by their providers? If they use the Phase Finder, will it let them know when their tier is eligible? If they contact their provider will the provider be able to tell them if and when they are eligible?
- Where will they be able to receive the vaccine? Once their tier is eligible for vaccines, where will they go to receive the vaccine? Again, will they be notified by their provider or the Phase Finder? If not, how will they know where to call, or look-up where they can receive the vaccine in their local community?

Please address the legislature with detailed plans for individuals getting the vaccine, as noted above with urgency.

Members of our community have been severely impacted by COVID-19 and will continue to be. Our community deserves transparent and immediate answers, as well as equitable access to a vaccine that will prevent this deadly virus from continuing to spread.

I recognize the complexity of the issue and appreciate your leadership and tireless work throughout this pandemic. I am hopeful that we can find a solution and ensure that all have access to information regarding the vaccine.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Alicia Rule". The signature is written in black ink and is positioned below the word "Sincerely,".

Representative Alicia Rule, L.I.C.S.W.