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Feb. 2, 2021

The Honorable Lawrence J. Hogan, Jr.
Governor, State of Maryland
State House
100 State Circle
Annapolis, Maryland 21401

Dear Governor Hogan,

I am writing with the urgent hope that you will heed the warning revealed in the data behind the vaccination rollout in Maryland and immediately correct course to ensure this life-saving vaccine is available to our residents in an equitable manner.

The data shows a deliberate and devastating — but reversible — pattern of inequity in the distribution of the life-saving coronavirus vaccine. Like every other health disparity in our great and wealthy state, policies are to blame for the inequities born by our Black and Brown residents. **The vaccination rollout plan in Maryland is absolutely no different than what our underserved communities have experienced time and time again throughout our history.**

We know based on an analysis of state health department data, roughly 16% of first doses of the vaccine have gone to Black people who make up about 31% of Maryland's population. Black people, meanwhile, are contracting the virus and dying at disproportionately higher rates. Likewise, approximately 4% of the vaccines have gone to our Latino neighbors who account for 11% of the population.

I am calling on you, Governor Hogan, to lead by leveraging the data and driving results that reverse the inequities realized thus far. I ask for your partnership in this.

So many have been quick to dismiss this data as an indication merely of hesitancy among Black and Brown people to get the vaccine. But that is not what we are witnessing here. The inequitable administration of the vaccination has absolutely nothing to do with fear. This is a shiftless and irresponsible rush to judgment.

There are tens of thousands of Baltimoreans who meet the current criteria and have a desperate desire to receive the vaccination. We need to move away from the narrative that focuses on the fear that people may feel about the vaccine and put the emphasis on why the roll out has been a disaster for underserved communities who most need it.

We must also not allow the sun to set on another day before State health officials across Maryland deploy an alternative system to PrepMod. Requiring that all vaccine appointments

be made through this web-based system leaves behind our residents without digital access or computer literacy. It also appears the processes in place have led to widespread instances of people being double-booked for the vaccines, leading to devastating last-minute cancellations in appointments.

It is irresponsible to leave decision to replace PrepMod up to the individual local health departments across our twenty-four jurisdictions who often do not have the capacity or operational infrastructure to effectively deploy an alternative system without assistance from the state.

Solutions within our grasp include mass vaccination sites that are accessible along public transit lines, peer-to-peer engagement to get those in our underserved communities signed up for vaccines and increased education, engagement and outreach.

It is also imperative that the Maryland Department of Health begins releasing the number of vaccines deployed to each jurisdiction. It is my understanding there have been multiple requests made for this information and local municipalities are still being left in the dark. Having this information readily available to health officials as well as the general public is key to ensuring vaccines are being equitably distributed across our state and within our local jurisdictions.

It is well within our power and control to deliver an equitable vaccine rollout. It is a choice our elected leaders can deliberately make to ensure we are doing everything we can to protect the lives of our most vulnerable residents. When government makes decisions in the dark, underserved communities always get a disparate amount of resources, bear the brunt of unintended consequences and wind up having a smaller voice at the table.

When the pandemic struck last year, you listened to my call as a delegate to track and release the data related to race and ethnicity. And the good news now is, because we are tracking this data, we have identified the problem, and we can immediately fix it.

Please call on me in any way you find useful to assist in immediately reversing these inequities and coming up with effective solutions for our residents.

Sincerely,



Nick J. Mosby
City Council President