



## OFFICE OF THE COUNTY EXECUTIVE

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**Joseph N. DiVincenzo, Jr.**

Essex County Executive

March 23, 2021

To: U.S. Senators Cory Booker and Robert Menendez  
U.S. Reps. Donald M. Payne, Jr., Mikie Sherrill, Albio Sires and Tom Malinowski  
Governor Phil Murphy

Since December 26, 2020, Essex County has operated a model vaccination program. And during the last several weeks, we have expanded our initiative to get vaccines into the black and brown communities and hard to reach populations. We are proud of the fact that we use 100 percent of the vaccines we receive on a weekly basis.

While that is great news to share, it is the reason for my letter to you. We have proven our vaccination initiatives to be efficient and effective, yet our weekly allotment has remained at 12,000 doses. If we received more doses, we could put shots in even more arms. I believe our sites are grossly underutilized. We have the capacity to be vaccinating between 25,000 and 30,000 people per week – if only we had more doses.

I understand there are not enough doses on a national level to meet the demand. But I am asking you to lobby President Biden to increase the number of doses to New Jersey so Essex County can get its fair share. Essex is the hardest hit county in the state when it comes to the number of COVID related deaths and cases. As of March 23<sup>rd</sup>, the 2,480 COVID deaths makes up about 12 percent of state COVID deaths and the 73,932 cases makes up about 9 percent of the state's total. We continually hear from the President that more doses will be available, yet we have not seen this in Essex County.

We have been working cooperatively with Governor Phil Murphy and his administration, and they have been very supportive of our efforts. We understand the state's obligation to allocate doses to every part of New Jersey. But if New Jersey received a larger allocation from the Federal government, then more could be earmarked for Essex County.

Getting people vaccinated has been our number one priority since September 2020 when we began planning for our vaccination program. We now are fighting the virus on several fronts with a robust series of initiatives that include the following:

*Putting Essex County First*

ESSEX COUNTY IS AN EQUAL OPPORTUNITY EMPLOYER

- Opening five vaccination centers that are administering 12,000 vaccines per week, but have a capacity to administer 25,000 to 30,000 per week.
- Busing 700 senior citizens from Newark, Orange, East Orange, Irvington, Bloomfield and Belleville to our vaccination centers each week.
- Hosting mobile vaccination sites in churches, senior buildings and community centers in Newark, Orange, East Orange and Irvington.
- Hosting pop up vaccination sites in homeless shelters, boarding homes and social service agencies to provide vaccinations to homeless residents, special needs residents and domestic violence victims.
- Scheduling special vaccination appointment times for teachers and support staff from public, private, parochial and charter schools to be vaccinated.
- Partnering with our mayors and local health officials to identify and vaccinate homebound residents.

We are working hard to reach every segment of the population and identify all the ways in which hard to reach populations can be reached. To date, we have administered about 200,000 doses of vaccines.

You know that I am an ardent advocate for Essex County and our residents. I believe it's an injustice that more support from the Federal government is not being given to ensure the number of doses to Essex County is not increased.

Thank you for considering my request and I look forward to working with you to increase the number of doses Essex County receives and other projects to benefit our residents. Together we will continue *Putting Essex County First*.

Sincerely,

  
Joseph N. DiVincenzo, Jr.  
Essex County Executive

cc: Governor Phil Murphy