

## Natick Select Board

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## Town of Natick • Select Board Office

March 10, 2021

The Honorable Charles D. Baker  
Office of the Governor  
Massachusetts State House  
Boston, MA 02133

Dear Governor Baker:

The Natick Select Board appreciate the steps your administration has taken to improve the state's COVID-19 vaccination website and to address the other barriers our seniors face in quickly securing a vaccine appointment. We recognize and support the value in providing centralized sites to provide large turnout to COVID-19 vaccination opportunities as more vaccine doses become available in Massachusetts.

However, we continue to be concerned about the senior populations that have been challenged and have experienced difficulty signing up for and traveling to appointments. Seniors continue to have trouble trying to sign up online and have difficulty getting transportation to other sites, and these challenges are exacerbated by the requirements imposed by the mass vaccination site protocols. This starkly contrasts with the local Board of Health clinics previously offered in which seniors have had positive experiences signing up by telephone, and driving to or securing transportation to the local Community-Senior Center with a short walk to the entrance to the gymnasium or drop off at the entrance. Many of the residents use walkers or canes.

On behalf of Natick residents, understanding the same elder issues are occurring in other communities, we strongly and respectfully urge you to reinstitute the practice of local Boards of Health providing vaccinations to residents and qualified employees in their cities and towns.

Local public health departments have been providing these types of services for many years and have accumulated a tremendous amount of knowledge and relevant experience. Like many other municipalities, we encourage you to direct your administration to collaborate with local public health departments by providing them with vaccine doses and other resources as an alternative and already-proven mechanism to provide vaccines to local seniors and other challenged populations.

In short, we do not view the vaccination program as an 'either/or' scenario; to the contrary, we strongly support and regard our local public health departments as valuable partners in the Commonwealth's collective efforts to combat the COVID-19 pandemic.

The increase in vaccinations is important. At the same time ease of making appointments and getting to appointments are also significant considerations. Getting out and about can be very difficult for seniors, and our local public health departments are exceedingly well-positioned to provide these vital services to the local challenged and vulnerable populations.

Thank you for revisiting the distribution plans.

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