



**The Office of State Representative Denise C. Garlick  
Vice Chair, House Committee on Ways and Means**

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Dear Secretary Sudders and the Vaccine Advisory Group,

We write to you today as elected State Representatives and the parents of children served by the Department of Developmental Services to urge you to include all DDS clients into Phase One of the vaccine distribution plan, regardless of home setting.

We appreciate the work and consideration you have given to the phasing of the vaccine rollout. This is especially reflected in Phase 1, which prioritized individuals living in congregate care settings. As the virus especially wreaked havoc in congregate care settings, DDS residential programs adapted to providing services 24/7 to their clients as day programs closed. Day services proceeded over Zoom for those living at home, although individuals' routines, which are so crucial to individuals with developmental disabilities, were completely upended. In other cases, individuals with disabilities and dual morbidities have continued to work in essential services throughout the pandemic, bringing them into contact with fellow employees and countless others as community spread continues in Massachusetts.

Individuals served by DDS share similar health vulnerabilities, whether they live at home or in congregate care settings. As individuals in congregate care receive their COVID-19 vaccinations, they will be able to return to day programs and receive critical services and supports. However, their peers living at home will be unable to access those same services based on where they live. A key principle of the FY21 budget was supporting and stabilizing human services providers so they would be there to provide services once a vaccine was available. It is crucial we enable our most vulnerable individuals to return to these day programs and to work safely.

In order to return to day programs and to remain safe in work environments, including Community Based Day Services, all program participants need to be vaccinated on the same schedule as their peers in congregate care. We urge you to move all individuals served by DDS residing at home into Phase One of the vaccine distribution plan. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Denise Garlick  
State Representative  
13<sup>th</sup> Norfolk District

James O'Day  
State Representative  
14<sup>th</sup> Worcester District

CC: Commissioner Jane Ryder