

Dear Secretary Sudders,

We write to you out of concern for the number of new cases of COVID and the dramatic decrease in the vaccines coming to Berkshire County over the past several weeks. Information received from Berkshire Health Systems (BHS) shows that in the past few weeks the Berkshires have fallen further behind, relative to the statewide average vaccination for those in the 65-74 age group. In the previous two weeks, the Berkshires had been 9th out of 14 counties. Yesterday's report, according to BHS, put Berkshire County at 11 out of 14 counties statewide.

Equally alarming is that two weeks ago there was one hospitalization for COVID in Berkshire County -- today that figure is 14, an increase of 1400%. The positivity rate among those tested for COVID has risen from 1.67% to 5% over the past month. Yesterday, MCLA reported that 17 of its students had tested positive, an increase from what they reported on Tuesday. Two weeks ago, Pittsfield had a positive test from the UK variant.

Meanwhile the numbers the State has been putting out about how well the Berkshires are doing seem to be far different from what we are seeing. On several occasions you and your team have stated the need to increase vaccine doses in areas that you believe to be vulnerable. Today's announcement regarding the need to increase vaccine for the Hynes is no different than the situation we are facing in the Berkshires. It appears that the serious situation in the Berkshires is in direct correlation with the dramatic decrease in the COVID vaccine supply for the Berkshires over the past month.

We are asking you to redirect additional doses of vaccine to the Berkshires now, before the situation gets any worse.

We thank you for your attention to this matter and look forward to hearing from you.

Respectfully yours,

John Barrett III
First Berkshire District

Paul Mark
Second Berkshire District

Smitty Pignatelli
Fourth Berkshire District