

United States Senate
WASHINGTON, DC 20510

The Honorable Xavier Becerra
Secretary, Department of Health and Human Services
200 Independence Avenue SW
Washington, DC 20201

Dear Secretary Becerra,

The recent reports from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) regarding effectiveness of vaccines against the Delta variant of COVID-19 highlight not only the importance of vaccination against COVID-19, but the need to ensure lasting and strengthened immunity for those most at risk. We must have a specific and comprehensive plan, available to the public, for seniors to receive booster shots as soon as recommended by the Food and Drug Administration.

The CDC reports cite that over time, vaccinated adults over the age of 75 become more vulnerable to hospitalizations as immunity wanes. While such individuals still have far greater protection than those who remain unvaccinated, there is a significant age gap in protection against hospitalizations, which can be improved.

We must not lose ground on the progress we have made in protecting older Americans from this deadly virus. We urge you to release a specific plan, working with states and local jurisdictions, which ensures outreach and access to vaccine boosters to seniors in every community — regardless of where they reside. We request specific information on the following:

1. How are senior centers, meal programs, and aging organizations being utilized in an ongoing way to ensure education and access to seniors for vaccine boosters, PPE supplies, and testing?
2. Do all private practice medical providers that want to be able to offer COVID-19 vaccines to their patients have the ability to do so?
3. What federal support is being provided or will be provided to states and local jurisdictions to create and maintain a system to follow-up with all vaccinated individuals to notify them when it is time to receive a booster shot?
4. How do you plan to disseminate information to seniors who do not use or have access to the internet, including those in rural communities, on when and how to get their booster shot?

We must not wait until the Administration's booster shot guidance is finalized to communicate with the public what the specific plan will be when it is their turn to receive their booster dose. As we have learned, combatting COVID-19 takes a significant amount of organization, communication, and coordination among federal, state, and local jurisdictions and medical providers. While we are encouraged by the effectiveness of the vaccine, we must remain vigilant and act on the information we have to prepare for an improved public health response. Given the adequate supply of vaccinations we currently have, we also urge you to make vaccine booster shots widely available as soon as possible to ensure the greatest level of immunity protection possible to keep our seniors and other vulnerable populations healthy and out of the hospital.

Thank you for your leadership. We look forward to working with you on this critical issue.

Sincerely,



Jacky Rosen
US Senator



Mark Kelly
US Senator