



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Joseph A. Griffo

## Griffo to Zucker: Reexamine and reconsider classification of emergency medical services personnel when it comes to COVID-19 vaccine

JOSEPH A. GRIFFO December 11, 2020

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New York State Sen. Joseph Griffo, R-I-C-Rome, communicated today with state Department of Health Commissioner Dr. Howard Zucker regarding the state's distribution of the COVID-19 vaccine to emergency medical services personnel (EMS).

Ambulance service providers and constituents have expressed concerns to the Senator that EMS would be excluded from the first tier of individuals scheduled to receive the vaccine. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices, as well as the National Academy of Science Framework for Equitable Allocation of COVID-19 Vaccines, have recommended that emergency medical technicians, paramedics and EMS personnel be included in Phase 1a of the vaccine allocation plan.

"While I understand the reasoning behind ensuring that high-risk healthcare workers, nursing home residents and staff are the first to be vaccinated, I am asking that you reexamine and reconsider the classification of emergency medical services personnel when it comes to prioritizing who should receive the vaccine," Sen. Griffo told Zucker. "Like all of our first responders, EMS personnel, based upon their job requirements and responsibilities, continue to play an important role in our efforts to mitigate the spread of COVID-19. Despite

a significant threat to their own safety and wellbeing and that of their families, these courageous men and women have provided valuable, life-saving assistance to those who have been afflicted by the virus. They should be included in the top tier of personnel who receive the vaccine.”

Additionally, Sen. Griffo urged Zucker to not discount smaller, independent pharmacies in more rural or suburban areas of the state when determining avenues to distribute and administer the vaccine to the public. These businesses have the ability to undertake such an initiative without overburdening them. Taking such action also will help to ensure that all New Yorkers have access to the vaccine.