



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Anthony H. Palumbo

NYS SENATE REPUBLICAN LONG ISLAND DELEGATION CALLS ON STATE TO STEP UP & FIX FAILED VACCINE ROLLOUT

ANTHONY H. PALUMBO January 14, 2021

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As New York's failed vaccine rollout plan continues, Senators Phil Boyle, Alexis Weik, Mario Mattera, and Anthony Palumbo were joined by local Suffolk County officials to blast Governor Cuomo's failure to launch an effective vaccine rollout plan that is accessible to all New Yorkers. Anna Foley, a Suffolk County senior citizen resident diagnosed with breast cancer and lymphoma, also joined the local leaders to give an account of her difficulty in finding a vaccine.

After the Federal Drug Administration issued a first emergency use authorization for the Pfizer vaccine on December 11th, 2020, and the Moderna vaccine on December 21st, 2020, Governor Cuomo launched a vaccine rollout plan across New York State. Since the plan was put into place, there have been serious issues with accessibility to vaccination sites, a lack of information and misinformation regarding the vaccination process, failure to provide comprehensive eligibility criteria, and a massive systemic overload. All of this has resulted in frustration, confusion, and fear among New Yorkers, many of whom are desperately in need of vaccination.

“Governor Cuomo’s vaccine rollout can only be described as utter chaos. Millions of New Yorkers have no idea when or where they can receive their life-saving shots, and they feel totally abandoned by their state government,” said Senator Phil Boyle.

“My office has been inundated with calls from constituents exasperated by the botched rollout of COVID-19 vaccines. Confusing and shifting eligibility, inaccurate websites with broken links, non-existent vaccine distribution sites, and unanswered phone calls are the result of a rollout program that the State had months to prepare for. Enough! State leaders need to stop the finger pointing and act now to fix the problems and provide clear, unambiguous, and complete information to New Yorkers about where and when they can opt to receive the COVID vaccine,” said Senator Weik.

“This problematic rollout, which originally offered so many hope after a dark year, has only done the opposite, instilling frustration and fear in New Yorkers. The State has only created confusion with announcing availability of vaccines when the truth is no one can access the hotline to get an appointment. The State’s vaccination system has delivered only false promises, and our residents deserve better. We need to work together to get clear information to our residents, work with businesses to get more distribution sites, and work with the federal government to get more doses. That will help all of our residents - most

importantly our seniors,” said Senator Mattera.

“Suffolk County is running short on vaccines, and we need more vaccines so local governments can set up sites to distribute them. The lag time is disturbing considering we are only in phase 1B. The state’s vaccination plan has also left behind some of Long Island’s most vulnerable residents. I implore the Governor to increase the supply of vaccines to Suffolk County, and to give our local government’s greater flexibility on determining vaccination sites and eligibility,” said Senator Palumbo.

Anna Foley, a senior citizen and resident of Suffolk County, is a breast cancer and lymphoma patient who has called every possible phone line, researched all available websites, reached out to the county, reached out to the Department of Health, called all the pharmacies, and was ultimately not successful in obtaining any information on how to get vaccinated.

The Senate Republican Conference’s Long Island delegation is urging the Democrat-controlled State Senate to join a Republican-led effort to restore checks and balances to Albany by repealing the Governor’s emergency powers. They, along with local leaders, are calling on Albany to fix the disastrous vaccine rollout. It is time to restore the authority back into the hands of the legislature.

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