

January 26, 2021

Secretary Marylou Sudders
Executive Office of Health and Human Services
1 Ashburton Place
Boston, MA 02108

Secretary James Peyser
Executive Office of Education
1 Ashburn Place
Boston, MA 02108

Dear Secretary Sudders and Secretary Peyser:

We write on behalf of the nine state university presidents, the Massachusetts State College Association, the Association of Professional Administrators, and the American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees, to respectfully urge you to revise the current COVID-19 vaccination schedule for Massachusetts to include the higher education workforce in Phase 2. We are happy to see that the schedule developed by the Massachusetts Vaccine Advisory Group includes Early Education and Care and the K-12 workforce in this next priority group for COVID-19 vaccine distributions (Phase 2). However, we believe that postsecondary educators and staff should also be included in Phase 2, especially those who are unable to work remotely.

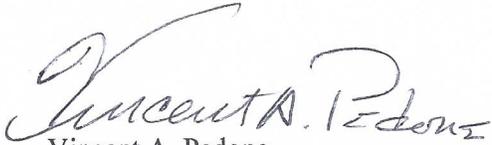
Despite our institutions temporarily offering most instruction remotely, many members of our workforce, especially those involved in direct student contact, continue to work on campus and face exposure to COVID-19 in the workplace. Including our higher education workforce in the Phase 2 vaccination schedule will allow our institutions to quickly develop plans to offer more in-person instruction and on-campus student activities for our students.

In fact, changing the COVID-19 vaccination schedule to include the higher education workforce in Phase 2 directly aligns with the Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices (ACIP) of the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) most [recent recommendations](#). These recommendations advise that our workforce be prioritized because to effectively deliver on our promise to educate our citizenry, our employee's "work-related duties must be performed on-site and involve being in close proximity to the public or to coworkers." At least 32 other states currently prioritize higher education workers in either their [Phase 2 \(or earlier\)](#) vaccine distribution plans. Prioritizing our workforce is a critical component of our mission to offer high-quality, affordable pathways to a post-secondary degree for Massachusetts residents.

Additionally, our public colleges and universities stand ready to assist the Commonwealth in the distribution of the COVID-19 vaccination by acting as local or regional immunization sites. Strategically located throughout the commonwealth, our campuses offer well-known, accessible and secure sites that would provide ample opportunities to support the state's broader vaccination distribution efforts. Our public higher education institutions have already proven to be natural partners for local COVID-19 mitigation efforts by working directly with the Massachusetts Emergency Management Agency. Many of our campuses assisted with COVID hospital surge capacity needs, offered a safe haven for health care workers and first responders, continue to serve as local COVID testing centers and act as community hubs for other COVID-related services for our communities.

Thank you for your consideration to include our higher education workforce in the Phase 2 vaccine distribution plan and your consideration of leveraging our campuses as COVID vaccine immunization sites. We are eager to continue to assist in your ongoing fight against the COVID-19 pandemic and our combined efforts to eradicate this disease.

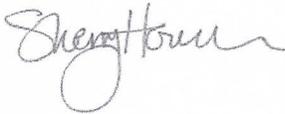
Sincerely,



Vincent A. Pedone
Executive Director
State Universities Council of Presidents



Christopher J. O'Donnell
President
Massachusetts State College Association



Sherry Horeanopoulos
President
Association of Professional Administrators

Thomasine Corbett

Thomasine Corbett
President
American Federation of State, County,
and Municipal Employees

C: Carlos Santiago, Commissioner, Massachusetts Department of Higher Education
Monica Bahrel, Commissioner, Massachusetts Department of Public Health
State Universities Council of Presidents
Massachusetts State College Association
Association of Professional Administrators
American Federation of State, County, and Municipal Employees