



New York State Volunteer Ambulance & Rescue Association
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December 10, 2020

The Honorable Andrew Cuomo
Governor of New York State
The Capitol
Albany, New York 12224

Commissioner Howard Zucker, MD
New York State Department of Health
Corning Tower
Albany, New York 12237

Dear Governor Cuomo and Commissioner Zucker,

The members of the New York State Volunteer Ambulance and Rescue Association (NYSVARA) are grateful that the medical providers on the front-lines of the COVID-19 pandemic will be considered high priorities for receiving the COVID-19 vaccination.

We ask that you do everything in your power to rapidly secure enough vaccine for all front-line medical workers that are potentially exposed to COVID-19 patients and provide for their vaccination as quickly as possible. EMS providers are unique in our risks and we ask that you find a way to shorten the gap in time between beginning to vaccinate the first hospital workers caring for COVID-19 patients and the EMS providers caring for COVID-19 patients.

Our volunteer members and our career EMS colleagues around the state encounter both known and unknown COVID-19 positive patients every day. Our responsibilities take us into uncontrolled environments which do not allow social distancing. While wearing appropriate PPE lowers the risk of infection, PPE is not absolute protection and vaccination is a vital step in protecting our members.

NYSVARA volunteers report for duty every day. Many of the New Yorkers hospitalized for COVID-19 begin their journey to the hospital in the compassionate care of EMS providers, already exhibiting symptoms. Other asymptomatic people call 911 for other purposes and are shedding the virus in the confined space of an ambulance alongside our crew members, even before they know that they have the virus.

Our volunteers give of themselves for their communities and we thank you, our public officials, and the incredible medical researchers spearheading the vaccine and vaccination effort for these efforts to keep us safe while serving our communities.

Sincerely,

Henry A. Ehrhardt

Henry A. Ehrhardt
President