



ASSEMBLYMEMBER
ANNA KELLES
Assembly District 125

Dear community,

I hope this note finds you all safe and in good health. It has been 3.5 weeks since I stepped into this new role as Assemblymember and it has indeed been a whirlwind. It is amazing how much can be crammed into such a short window of time! We have just started the budget season so stay tuned for a summary and announcement for a budget town hall soon.

One of the biggest issues of course that we are all dealing with is the vaccine rollout. I have received countless communications about extenuating circumstances preventing access, questions about eligibility, and difficulty getting appointments even for those who are eligible. Although the rollout of the vaccine is in the exclusive purview of the governor, I have been sharing personal stories and seeking information from the local and state Departments of Health and the Governor's staff for specific issues that arise. For example I have pressed them to expand mobile vaccine units and add to existing or next tiers eligibility for farm workers, caregivers of elders, including those in residential facilities, parents of children with severe illnesses and autoimmune diseases, and Family Type Homes for Adults (FTHA) to name a few. I have shared personal stories, as have many of my colleagues in the Assembly, about the difficulty in getting an appointment even for those who qualify. Making the governor aware of these issues and requests is critical so thank you to those who have shared so far.

At the core of all of these issues is the reality that the state is receiving a small fraction of vaccines compared to the number needed. At the current rate we are receiving vaccines, it will take approximately 14 weeks from the time the rollout began to serve tiers 1a and 1b. Once the state sites opened last week, significant supplies were redirected, exacerbating shortages in counties throughout the state. As many of you may have heard, the next vaccine expected to obtain emergency approval is the Johnson & Johnson single dose vaccine. They have committed to produce and distribute 100 million vaccines in the US throughout this year, which is approximately 30% of the US population. This will help speed the process of vaccinations but we are still in for many months of rollout. As hard as it is to say, we are still in this COVID reality together and need to continue practicing social distancing and wearing masks for the foreseeable future.

As the vaccine rolls out, I am also hearing questions and concerns related to vaccine efficacy and safety. What is this vaccine? Is it safe? How did they get them through trials so quickly and

did they cut corners? What is an emergency FDA approval? What are the side effects and how common are they? To help the community navigate these questions I am hosting a COVID-19 Vaccine Town Hall this Wednesday evening.

Here is the information:

COVID-19 Vaccine Town Hall Series with Assemblywoman Anna Kelles

Wednesday, January 27th from 7PM-8:30PM

Description: Join Assemblymember Anna Kelles for a panel discussion with local public health experts on the Covid-19 vaccine. Topics will include an introduction to the science of the Covid-19 vaccines currently available to the public, a discussion of their manufacture and function, vaccine safety and side effects, what to expect at the vaccine clinic, and the expected timeline for availability. Panelists will field questions at the end of the discussion from the public.

Moderator:

Anna Kelles, PhD -- Assemblywoman, 125th District

Panelists:

Brian Wasik, PhD -- Research Associate at the College of Veterinary Medicine at Cornell University specializing in viruses and how they cause pandemics.

Selina Lenetsky, BA, BSN, RN -- Cayuga Medical Center and Cayuga Health Systems COVID Operations

Douglas MacQueen, MD -- Infectious Disease Specialist, Cayuga Medical Center

Register for the Event:

https://us02web.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_3iZHaPCISxePr_cKeQRlpw

Stream live on youtube: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2pFiGJpAV6A&feature=youtu.be>

One more tidbit. A podcast that folks might find helpful is CNN's Coronavirus: Fact vs Fiction - <https://www.cnn.com/audio/podcasts/corona-virus>. It provides a lot of clarification on information and misinformation circulating and tips and tricks to stay safe.

In solidarity and health,

Anna

