



Congress of the United States  
House of Representatives



The Legislature of the  
State of Texas

February 9, 2021

Dr. John W. Hellerstedt, Commissioner  
Texas Department of State Health Services  
1100 West 49<sup>th</sup> Street  
Austin, Texas 78756-3199

Dear Commissioner Hellerstedt:

This is to respectfully request that the Texas Department of State Health Services (DSHS) reviews the enclosed plan and designates the multi-county effort of Brooks, Duval, Jim Hogg, and Zapata counties as a COVID-19 vaccine hub provider as soon as possible.

The Brooks, Duval, Jim Hogg, and Zapata Multi-County hub proposal would follow relevant guidelines from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and DSHS to ensure that every willing and eligible person is vaccinated. This includes vaccinating Phase 1A and 1B populations regardless of where they reside; administering all vaccine doses within five to seven days of receipt; daily reporting of administered doses to ImmTrac2 and TDEM; ensuring an equitable distribution of vaccines, targeting the hardest-hit ZIP codes and communities; and monitoring recipients for allergic reactions after they are vaccinated.

The proposal also includes plans to have as many as six vaccine distribution sites throughout the four counties, leveraging nearly 200 volunteers to administer 8,000 vaccines per week. Vaccine storage and handling would be managed and supported by DSHS Public Health Region (PHR) 11 staff based in the Zapata field office.

After two months of vaccine distribution, these four counties have received approximately 2,000 doses for a combined population of nearly 40,000 persons. Many residents report feeling left behind because they live in rural communities.

To ensure these rural South Texans are vaccinated, we urge you to approve the proposed plan and designate this combined effort as an approved COVID-19 vaccine hub provider as soon as possible. Thank you for your consideration and attention to this matter, and please let us know of your decision at your earliest convenience and do not hesitate to call upon us whenever we may be of further assistance.

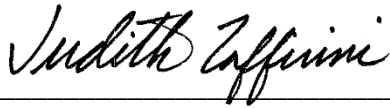
Very truly yours,

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Henry Cuellar  
U.S. Representative, District 28

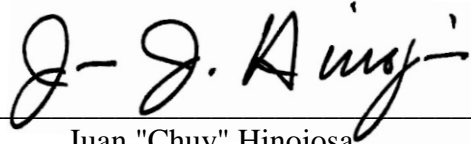
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Vicente Gonzalez  
U.S. Representative, District 15



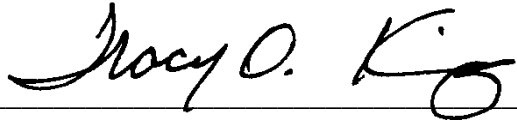
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Judith Zaffirini  
State Senator, District 21



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Juan "Chuy" Hinojosa  
State Senator, District 20



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Tracy O. King  
State Representative, District 80



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Ryan Guillen  
State Representative, District 31

XC: Luis Saenz, Chief of Staff, Office of the Governor of Texas  
Nim Kidd, Chief, Texas Division of Emergency Management  
Imelda Garcia, Associate Commissioner, Department of State Health Services  
Saroj Rai, PhD, Immunization Branch Manager, Department of State Health Services  
Emilie Prot, DO, PHR 11 Medical Director, Department of State Health Services

Enc: Brooks, Duval, Jim Hogg, and Zapata counties' vaccine hub plan.