

November 24, 2020

Dr. Robert R. Redfield
Director
Centers for Disease Control and Prevention
1600 Clifton Road
Atlanta, Georgia 30329

Dear Director Redfield:

I want to commend the Administration for prioritizing a COVID-19 vaccine and for dual tracking vaccine manufacturing and clinical trials, known as Operation Warp Speed. This unparalleled achievement will help ensure millions of doses of safe and effective COVID-19 vaccines are delivered to the American people, with the first doses intended to go out this year. A vaccine will help save lives, get Montanans and Americans across the country back to work, and get our economy going again.

It was my privilege to work alongside our nation's top scientists, researchers, American innovators, and Administration officials to lead the fight in the Senate and secure funding for Operation Warp Speed. It was this work, my background as a chemical engineer, and a call from my mom telling me that Pfizer was conducting a vaccine trial in Bozeman, that led to my wife and I participating in the trial. My goal is to help build confidence and trust for Montanans and the American people wondering if they should take the vaccine when it is approved.

We are seeing encouraging clinical trial results, with Pfizer, Moderna, and AstraZeneca showing high efficacy rates for their vaccine candidates. Now that Pfizer has submitted its request to the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) for emergency use authorization for its vaccine candidate, I write to you regarding plans for COVID-19 vaccine distribution. Recognizing the many challenges associated with the distribution of a vaccine, including shipping and storage requirements that can make vaccine access in rural communities especially difficult, I implore the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) to continue working with states like Montana to ensure that access to COVID-19 vaccines not be limited by geography.

As states across the country work to develop their vaccine distribution plans in consultation with the federal government, I encourage the CDC to consider the unique challenges facing those in remote and rural communities in Montana and across the nation who may have difficulty accessing vaccination services. It will also be critical to ensure that frontline health care heroes, essential workers, individuals with medical conditions possessing risk factors for severe COVID-19 illness, as well as staff and residents of long-term care facilities such as nursing homes have access to a safe and effective vaccine as soon as possible. Additionally, it will be important to ensure that steps are taken during the distribution process to ensure no vaccine is wasted, such as

broadening the distribution of the vaccine if doses are available and critical populations are taken care of. I understand that vaccine supply may be limited at the beginning of the vaccination program, and I appreciate the CDC's attention to equitable access to a COVID-19 vaccine, including in rural states like Montana that have been hit hard by the coronavirus.

Thank you for your attention to this critical matter and dedication to the health of the American people throughout this pandemic.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Steve Daines". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, stylized "S" at the beginning.

STEVE DAINES
United States Senator