



Jim Justice
Governor of West Virginia

January 6, 2022

The Honorable Joseph R. Biden, Jr.
President of the United States
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW
Washington D.C. 20500

Dear Mr. President:

I write to you today with the utmost urgency. Our people need access to a fourth dose, today, as we continue to fight this COVID-19 pandemic. West Virginia's population is one of the oldest, most chronically ill, and therefore most vulnerable populations in the Nation.

What made West Virginia a great success in the early days of vaccination—our leading the U.S. in vaccine delivery to nursing homes and elderly populations—is exacerbating the danger omicron and other COVID-19 variants pose. Because we were the first to vaccinate these populations, those same people were the first to absolutely need their first booster shots. That means, today, the elderly in our nursing homes and the most vulnerable around our State likely have more reduced antibody protection than similar populations in other states. The urgency is only greater because much of West Virginia is rural so omicron has yet to become the dominant variant here. It is projected, however, to become the dominant variant in only weeks, at best, tearing through our communities as we have already seen abroad and in other parts of our Nation.

We simply cannot wait.

I write to you today to request, respectfully and with all my heart, that you direct your Federal Drug Administration and Centers for Disease Control to allow the most vulnerable West Virginians and our essential workforce to receive their fourth dose to give them the best chance possible against serious illness or much, much worse.

As West Virginia has done time and again throughout this pandemic, we will take that crucial first step and help develop best practices for our sister states. We request to serve as a pilot project for a fourth dose here in the U.S.

My expert team of advisors update me constantly with the latest studies, reports, and data trends from around the world. As I'm sure you know from your own advisors, early findings out of Israel show a fourth dose to be safe just four months from the first booster. And one week after that fourth dose, they are showing a five-fold increase in antibody levels.

These early findings are extremely promising, and I offer that those most vulnerable West Virginians and essential workers in West Virginia who should choose to take part in the pilot project and obtain a fourth dose would provide a great source of data for our own national medical experts as they make their decisions.

As I said, our State's elderly were among the earliest vaccinated, among the earliest boosted, and now are among the most vulnerable because of it. I ask for your sincere consideration to give our most vulnerable the best chance possible to get through these unprecedented times.

Mr. President, we stand ready to lead on boosters and we believe the science justifies a pilot project here in our Great State of West Virginia, where so many are so far out from their vaccinations and, now, boosters. Please allow us this hope.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Jim Justice". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large initial "J" and a long, sweeping underline.

Jim Justice
Governor