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U.S. Reps. Kind, Gallagher: Urge Operation Warp Speed leadership to take steps to ensure rural communities aren't left behind

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Washington, DC —Today, **Reps. Ron Kind (D-WI)** and **Mike Gallagher (R-WI)** sent a bipartisan letter to Operation Warp Speed leadership urging them to consider the unique challenges of vaccine distribution to rural areas across Wisconsin and take steps to support timely and equitable vaccine access for rural communities.

Wisconsin state and local health leaders have put together plans to conduct COVID-19 vaccination campaigns at unprecedented scale and speed, but additional resources and federal support are critical to carrying out these efforts. Further, rural health care providers have already signaled concern about a number of unique challenges they might face in delivering vaccines to rural areas, such as ensuring vaccination sites are accessible, securing staff to coordinate logistics and administer vaccines, and ensuring adequate ultra-cold storage capacity. With COVID-19 cases surging across rural areas in Wisconsin, it's crucial that these communities have access to timely vaccination, underscoring the need for support with logistics.

"We are at a turning point in the COVID-19 pandemic as vaccines are starting to be distributed across the country," said **Rep. Ron Kind**. "We need to be prepared to safely, effectively, and equitably distribute the vaccine to all Wisconsinites, regardless of where they live. To that end, it's critical that additional resources be provided to state and local public health leaders to help address the challenges of distributing vaccines to rural areas and ensure our rural communities are not left

behind."

"Rural hospitals across Wisconsin will face unique challenges in distributing and storing the Coronavirus vaccine," said **Rep. Mike Gallagher**. "We have to make sure these communities are not left behind, and that will require both resources and guidance to our state and local health leaders. Operation Warp Speed has played an incredible role in our vaccine development and distribution and I am confident they will take whatever steps necessary to ensure our rural hospitals are properly equipped to provide vaccines to their communities."

Read the letter here.