

Wisconsin Hospital Association: Calls for more urgency in vaccine production

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Madison, Wis., Feb. 22, 2021—In case you missed it, Wisconsin Hospital Association President and CEO Eric Borgerding expressed frustration on behalf of the state's hospitals and health systems about the limited supply of COVID-19 vaccine coming into Wisconsin in an editorial appearing in the *Wisconsin State Journal*. Vaccination appointments are being cancelled or delayed not because hospitals cannot keep up with demand, but because they are not receiving enough vaccine for their communities. Borgerding calls for more urgency from those in charge of vaccine production and distribution so that Wisconsin can benefit from the capacity of our hospitals and health systems to deliver hundreds of thousands of vaccines per week.

You can read the op-ed below or [here](#).

Hospitals can vaccinate many more people, but supply isn't keeping up with demand

By: Eric Borgerding | Wisconsin State Journal | February 20, 2021

Just as they are doing with COVID testing, Wisconsin hospitals and health systems are again playing a critical role in the state's response to the pandemic. They are administering hundreds of thousands of COVID vaccines to Wisconsinites, with the capacity to vaccinate many thousands more every single day.

So why are appointments for vaccinations being cancelled and delayed? The answer is frustratingly simple — not enough vaccine is coming into Wisconsin.

Hospitals, health systems, clinics and pharmacies requested 340,000 first doses of vaccine — just for last week, according to state officials. But only a fraction of those requests — 71,000 doses — were fulfilled.

Vaccine supplies are expected to improve a bit in the near term. That is good news. But supplies will still fall short of demand, even as hospitals and others keep working to finish protecting people 65 and older, who make up 90% of COVID deaths. Less than half of this older population has been vaccinated in many Wisconsin counties, and phone calls and appointment requests to hospitals, clinics and health systems have not slowed down. Many of the more than 550,000 unvaccinated seniors in our state are reaching out for their turn. And on March 1, Wisconsin is scheduled to make another 650,000 people eligible to receive their first dose (of a two-dose vaccine), widening the gap between supply and demand.

Hospitals and health systems throughout Wisconsin have mobilized thousands of staff and allocated substantial funding, space, supplies, time and operational resources to schedule and administer vaccines very quickly. They have already vaccinated hundreds of thousands, including seniors, front-line health care workers and first responders. They are very ready and willing to vaccinate many thousands more. But instead, they are forced to cancel or not schedule thousands of appointments because vaccine supply and allocation is still falling far short of demand and capability.

The current situation is frustrating and confusing to those still waiting for a vaccine and a return to a more normal life. Dedicated health care providers that have marshalled the resources to get shots into arms as quickly and safely as possible share that frustration. To be sure, Wisconsin has made notable progress from where we started just a few months ago. Yet our state is held back by vaccine production and allocation. State officials are doing what they can to bring more doses here, but those decisions are ultimately made in Washington, D.C., and elsewhere.

Wisconsin's hospitals and health systems will continue giving as many vaccines as

they get from the state. Until supply and distribution improve, they ask for patience from our communities and a stronger, more urgent response from those in charge of vaccine production and distribution. Hospitals and health systems are eager and able to serve their communities and vaccinate more of their patients — a lot more.

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ABOUT THE WISCONSIN HOSPITAL ASSOCIATION

The Wisconsin Hospital Association (WHA) advocates on behalf of its 130-plus member hospitals and health systems to enable the delivery of high-quality, high-value care to the citizens of Wisconsin. Learn more at wha.org.