

Wisconsin Manufacturers & Commerce: Manufacturers should be prioritized for vaccine

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MADISON – Wisconsin Manufacturers & Commerce (WMC) – the combined state chamber and manufacturers’ association – expressed its frustration on Thursday that Gov. Tony Evers and the Department of Health Services (DHS) continued to omit essential manufacturing workers from the COVID-19 vaccine distribution plan. WMC sent [multiple letters](#) to DHS and the State Disaster Medical Advisory Committee prior to the final decision on Phase 1b eligibility and reached out again prior to Phase 1c being determined this week. Unfortunately, Gov. Evers and DHS disregarded [recommendations from medical experts](#) at the Centers for Disease Control & Prevention (CDC) for Phase 1b. The CDC’s Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices recommended manufacturing workers be included in Phase 1b along with first responders, teachers, grocery workers and other frontline workers who are at higher risk for “workplace-related exposure.” They were not included in the state’s final plan.

Further, the same medical experts recommended that “essential workers not previously included in Phase 1a or 1b” should be included in Phase 1c. The governor and his administration once again ignored the expert recommendations when determining who would be included in Phase 1c starting on Mar. 29. Under the governor’s plan, manufacturing workers will receive no priority for the COVID-19 vaccine and will have to wait until the general public is eligible sometime in May. Following the Phase 1c announcement, WMC President & CEO Kurt Bauer released the below statement:

“Unlike some businesses, the hard-working and dedicated ‘shop floor’ employees of manufacturing companies haven’t been able to work remotely during the COVID-19 pandemic. Instead, as essential employees, they showed up to work day after day in order to buoy the Wisconsin economy and produce the critical products our state

and nation needed – including a variety of personal protective equipment for hospitals, businesses and others.

But despite their contribution to our economy and the elevated risk exposure many manufacturing employees face, they will have to wait until May to be in line with everyone else to receive COVID-19 vaccinations in Wisconsin. This is simply unfair.”