



JOE SANFELIPPO

STATE REPRESENTATIVE • 15th ASSEMBLY DISTRICT

(608) 266-0620
FAX: (608) 282-3615
Toll-Free: (888) 534-0015
Rep.Sanfelippo@legis.wi.gov

P.O. Box 8953
Madison, WI 53708-8953

For Immediate Release
January 28, 2021

Contact:
Rep. Joe Sanfelippo
Rep.Sanfelippo@legis.wi.gov
608.266.0620

Assembly Passes Legislation to Improve Wisconsin's Vaccine Distribution

This afternoon, the Wisconsin State Assembly passed Assembly Bills 4 and 5, offering solutions for improving Wisconsin's ongoing rollout of COVID-19 vaccines. The two bills, authored by Rep. Joe Sanfelippo (R–New Berlin), reflect the feedback provided earlier this month by doctors, pharmacists, and other healthcare leaders from across Wisconsin at a hearing of the Assembly Health Committee, of which Rep. Sanfelippo is also chairman. During the hearing, these healthcare experts shared their experiences with Wisconsin's vaccine distribution to date and offered a number of suggestions on how to streamline and improve the massive undertaking to ensure that vaccines get administered as soon as they become available.

“Getting this vaccination program right may be one of the most critical efforts we ever take on in our lifetimes, which is why it is unacceptable that [Wisconsin has ranked among the worst states](#) in the nation in vaccines administered per capita. After hearing from those on the frontlines of Wisconsin's healthcare system, we know how to improve: we need to make sure to act with much greater flexibility and urgency so that we can get shots into arms as quickly as possible. These bills will help us do exactly that,” Sanfelippo said.

In order to ensure that the supply of healthcare workers available to administer shots never becomes a bottleneck for the state's vaccination effort, [Assembly Bill 4](#) removes a number of unnecessary bureaucratic roadblocks. These changes include requiring the Wisconsin Department of Health Services to act on vaccine provider applications within 10 days, as well as allowing qualified pharmacy students and technicians to perform immunizations under supervision. “Making these small changes now will help prevent holdups in the staffing pipeline over the coming months when vaccine supply greatly increases and we will need all available hands on deck to meet demand,” added Sanfelippo.

Similarly, Assembly Bill 5 responds to issues identified during the hearing about instances of the state's lack of communication and urgency in the vaccine distribution process to date. Wisconsin has been slower than many other states at responding to changing guidance and developments, leaving some providers stuck in a holding pattern while awaiting the green light from the state on how to move ahead. Likewise, while people in other states can easily verify their eligibility, check for available appointments nearby, and schedule their visits—all from a single, centralized, and easy-to-use website—Wisconsiners are left in the dark about when and how they will be able to receive their vaccinations.

“[Assembly Bill 5](#) addresses these issues by requiring DHS to provide a roadmap for when the general public will be able to receive the vaccine, as well as to offer a central vaccine scheduling portal to make it easy for people to sign up when it's their turn. This bill also ensures that seniors, [who have been hit hardest by the pandemic](#) and remain the most vulnerable, get access to any available doses immediately. We know that these simple actions can help get our vaccination effort back on track. I call on my legislative colleagues and the governor to move quickly on enacting these bills into law,” Sanfelippo said.

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The [15th Assembly District](#) includes most of West Allis and the northern half of New Berlin.