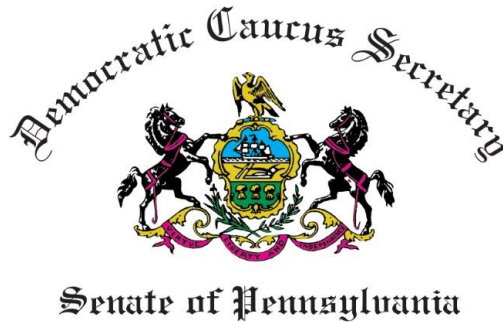


12TH DISTRICT
STATE SENATOR
MARIA COLLETT

SENATE BOX 203012
THE STATE CAPITOL
HARRISBURG, PA 17120-3012
717-787-6599
FAX: 717-783-7328

NORTH WALES OFFICE
GWYNEDD CORPORATE CENTER
1180 WELSH ROAD • SUITE 130
NORTH WALES, PA 19454
215-368-1429
FAX: 215-368-2374

WARMINSTER OFFICE
1410 W. STREET ROAD • SUITE A
WARMINSTER, PA 18974
215-674-1246
FAX: 215-674-1361



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AGING & YOUTH,
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RECREATIONAL DEVELOPMENT
JUDICIARY
LOCAL GOVERNMENT
RULES & EXECUTIVE NOMINATIONS

EMAIL: senatorcollett@pasenate.com
WEBSITE: www.SenatorCollett.com
FACEBOOK: @SenatorCollett
TWITTER: @SenatorCollett
INSTAGRAM: @SenatorCollett

February 17, 2021

Alison Beam, Acting Secretary
Pennsylvania Department of Health
Health and Welfare Building
625 Forster St., 8th Floor
Harrisburg, PA 17120

Dear Acting Secretary Beam:

Today's press conference in which the Department of Health announced the misadministration of tens of thousands of second doses as first doses, resulting in the setback by at least another three weeks of Pennsylvania's vaccine rollout schedule, has raised new concerns that must be addressed. At the same time, today's announcement further crystallized why the questions asked of the Department by me, my colleagues in the legislature, and the press over the last few weeks require timely and forthright responses that have yet to be delivered.

While we can certainly agree that pointing fingers is a waste of precious time, there are plenty of gaps that cannot go unaddressed. In fact, the concepts of triage, monitoring, and autopsy are just as important to a mass vaccination effort as they are to patients in a hospital bed. If I observe a patient under my care become unresponsive and immobile after implementation of a new protocol, I would question the orders I was given and intervene to restore my patient on a path of recovery. Just as that standard of care is required of me, so must the Department be willing to assess and correct deficiencies that have led to misadministration of thousands of doses and impacted potentially hundreds of thousands of Pennsylvanians. I am asking you and the Department to question your orders and use the tools of assessment at your fingertips to implement improvements that will restore the Commonwealth's vaccine administration efforts to prevent being further overwhelmed when national partners are able to amplify production and distribution.

There is no question that Pennsylvania's vaccine rollout has been wrought with trouble from the outset. As of today, our state is 47th in the nation in the percentage of received vaccine doses administered.¹ And while this certainly isn't the only measure of success, it is one of many data points that all suggest our Commonwealth in particular *still* has much room to grow.

¹ [States ranked by percentage of COVID-19 vaccines administered: Feb. 17 \(beckershospitalreview.com\)](https://www.beckershospitalreview.com/covid-19-vaccine-administration-rates/)

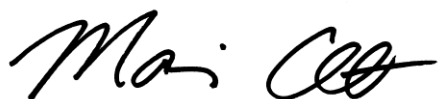
Frankly, that is why today's suggestion that there was nothing the Department could have done to prevent this setback is particularly disheartening. Despite repeated public calls from the Department and the Administration for input and ideas to improve our processes, the Department has not implemented even the most basic strategies that other states have used successfully to manage their rollout *despite* a lack of vaccine supply nationally.

At the February 4th Joint Hearing of the Senate Aging & Youth and Health & Human Services Committees, I specifically asked how the Department was communicating with retail pharmacy providers to track the discrepancies between dosage allocation and reported administration. Similarly, my colleagues and I requested the Department provide us with the difference in allocated doses vs administered doses statewide as of January 31, 2021. Those numbers have yet to be provided. Had these types of inquiry, tracking and collating been undertaken sooner, even by just two weeks, we could have course-corrected quicker.

Therefore, I once again renew my call for greater accountability and transparency in the Department's interactions with retail pharmacy providers. The delays, the confusion, the cumbersomeness, the appearance to the general public that things haven't been fair, and now the discovery of major mistakes like this one, have eroded Pennsylvanians' trust in the Department's ability to shepherd us through to the other side of the COVID crisis, which is where we're all so desperate to be. And however the Department chooses to officially phrase what happened, the people in my district, and people across the Commonwealth, are smart enough to see this for what it is, a screw-up, plain and simple. They want to know how the Department of Health plans to ensure it doesn't happen again. They want the kind of change that allows them to feel confident that their and their loved ones' appointments are secure, if they're lucky enough to have them, and see the Department making bigger changes to the systems that they are repeatedly, loudly and in unison, telling all of us who will listen are not working.

I welcome the opportunity to speak to the Department to discuss, once again, specific and immediate changes that I believe need to be made to right this ship.

Regards,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Maria Collett". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Maria" written in a larger, more prominent script than the last name "Collett".

Senator Maria Collett, 12th District

CC: Governor Tom Wolf
Dr. Wendy Braund, MD, MPH, MEd, FACPM, Interim Acting Physician General
Senator Jay Costa, Minority Leader
Senator Art Haywood