

The Honorable Governor Ned Lamont
210 Capitol Avenue
Hartford, CT 06106

March 5, 2021

Dear Governor Lamont,

We, the undersigned, are the Commission on People with Disabilities for the town of Westport. We write to request that you reconsider your shift to a purely age-based eligibility criterion for receiving COVID-19 vaccines.

You, and your Vaccine Allocation Subcommittee, have argued that the risks of death or serious illness from COVID are directly connected to age, and that therefore your revised plan has both simplicity and equity. This is half-true – this plan certainly has the advantage of simplicity, but has decreased the equity in vaccine distribution.

People with disabilities carry comorbidities at a higher risk than the general population. Removing the comorbidity eligibility criterion has put an entire group of people who are younger, but who are actually less healthy or have underlying health risks, behind people who are older but in fact safer.

In addition, some disabilities (including intellectual and developmental disabilities) carry with them a reduced ability to maintain safety protocols, including mask wearing and maintaining social distance. This risk is agonizing to their loved ones, who fear their inability to keep themselves safe in the manner that their nondisabled peers can.

We stand with the many disability advocacy groups, including the complaint filed by Disability Rights Connecticut, who are urging you to prioritize health comorbidities and disability categories in Connecticut's vaccine distribution plan **as you have done for medical responders, school personnel, and childcare providers.**

Sincerely yours,

Westport Commission on People with Disabilities
→ insert names here