



January 27, 2021

The Honorable Jim Strickland
Mayor, City of Memphis
125 N. Main Street
Suite 700
Memphis, TN 38103

Dear Mayor Strickland:

Thank you for your questions regarding allocation of COVID-19 vaccine doses to Shelby County. I am grateful for the working relationship we have forged, and further grateful for you reaching out to confirm the facts.

Unfortunately, it has been reported that Shelby County has not received an equitable share of vaccine doses relative to other counties across the state. However—and I want to be clear and unmistakable about this—any such claims are incorrect.

The state's initial vaccine distribution efforts targeted frontline healthcare workers and certain first responders to protect the healthcare system. Based on Joint Annual Reports filed by hospitals in Shelby County, healthcare workers at hospitals in Shelby County comprise 10% of the statewide healthcare population and have received approximately 35,675 doses starting in December, which actually includes some second doses and in total comprises 14.7% of the total healthcare worker distribution statewide.

Beginning January 8, 2021, vaccine distribution shifted primarily to population-based allocations across all counties, and Shelby County has received approximately 12.7% of the statewide population-based distributions. Doses are also allocated for long-term care facility populations correlating to the number of residents/patients in a particular county, along with minor adjustments made to account for socially vulnerable populations, staff at long-term care facilities, and vaccination of qualifying patients at hospitals, bringing the total number to 68,700 for all non-healthcare population doses for Shelby County through January 24, 2021.

In sum, then, 104,375 total doses have been distributed into Shelby County as of January 24, 2021. Furthermore, it is the state's intent to continue relying primarily on these population-based distributions to achieve a fair and equitable allocation across all communities.

To be sure, logistical constraints such as minimum vaccine shipment sizes (e.g., Pfizer vaccine distribution is subject to minimum lot sizes of 975 doses), cold storage limitations, and local throughput limitations and experience will result in minor ebbs and flows at the margins from week to week. In other words, county by county distribution percentages will not always mirror

precisely the relative populations of each county at any given point in time. However, we are committed to our plan which calls for continuous monitoring and rebalancing of supply and distribution to ensure a fair and proportional equitable allocation across all communities.

As a final note, I would urge you to caution the community from making assumptions about dose allocation levels by attempting to extrapolate from dose administration data found in the state immunization information system (TennIIS). Administration data is necessarily limited to information actually uploaded by local health departments and providers once doses are used, and we understand there may be a temporary need to focus manpower on actual dose administration at the expense of timely reporting data to the state. This naturally results in artificially low administration rate numbers in some areas, and perhaps also discounts the tremendous local effort to vaccinate residents. Having said that, it is critical for local partners to make significant effort to improve compliance with mandatory CDC and state reporting requirements, as well as be accountable and transparent regarding inventory levels and ability to timely administer the doses that are provided. We will monitor that information as well, and we certainly stand ready to assist you in the event dose administration rates prove to be unacceptable in the Memphis and Shelby County community.

I hope this data is helpful. And thank you again for your partnership and your willingness to work together cooperatively for the benefit of our citizens.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Bill Lee". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke at the end.

Bill Lee
Governor