



**BOARD OF SELECTMEN**

Kevin Gaspar, Sr., Chairman  
David Desroches  
David E. Wojnar

**TOWN ADMINISTRATOR**

Julie Hebert

OFFICE OF THE BOARD OF SELECTMEN

**TOWN OF ACUSHNET**

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March 1, 2021

His Excellency Charles Baker  
Governor of the Commonwealth  
State House  
Boston, MA 02133  
*Delivered via USPS and Electronic Mail*

Dear Governor Baker,

On behalf of our small town in Bristol County, we want to start by expressing our deep appreciation for your excellent leadership and dedication to our community during the course of the pandemic. The Town of Acushnet has greatly benefitted from your support and partnership in protecting our residents, keeping our schools functioning, maintaining the funding sources needed to balance our finances and sustain town services, and providing an avenue for our municipality to offer free testing to our residents on a consistent basis.

Town of Acushnet officials are hopeful that the Commonwealth and local administration can continue this partnership together to provide mass vaccinations to our residents and staff. We ask you to reconsider your most recent decision and preserve a complimentary role for municipal governments in the vital work of vaccine distribution. It is our strong conviction that community based clinics are a vital, accessible option to vulnerable Phase 2 populations who, due to age, physical and mental health conditions, mobility challenges, or economic barriers, cannot readily book an appointment and travel to a mass vaccine site. In addition, we are ready, willing, and able to quickly and efficiently offer vaccines to our Phase 2 essential workers, namely teachers, who are being called upon to take on a larger role in serving the public education needs of students in the next month.

We believe we are best suited to request, receive, and run vaccination clinics for our essential workers who we directly employ, such as public works and school personnel. The infrastructure is already in place from testing our employees on a weekly basis, and our efficiency in high demand processing of tests is tried and true. Our team of EMS, EMA, and COA staff have mastered large-scale testing of over 400 residents within a 3-hour time frame flawlessly. Particularly in light of Commissioner Riley's recent announcement that the state wishes to see elementary students in school full time by April, empowering local governments to quickly vaccinate school employees at a

convenient location and without forcing them to compete with one million other eligible residents on a state website that has struggled to meet demand would be an incredible advantage toward meeting this goal.

The possibility of the one-dose Johnson & Johnson vaccine being available in the near future makes this prospect an even more compelling approach to promote healthy schools and protect essential personnel without interrupting the flow of the Pfizer and Moderna vaccines to the mass vaccination sites. We respectfully request your advocacy in supporting the vaccination of school personnel through a municipal approach utilizing the Johnson & Johnson vaccine, especially since the Commonwealth will receive more than four times the amount required to vaccinate all the teachers in the state. We need our teachers to focus on educating and supporting the children in our districts so we can start addressing the substantial social-emotional challenges the pandemic has created for students and their families. The reality is that the health and wellness of our educators and staff is essential in our efforts to bring students back to full in-person learning, and a one-dose vaccine distributed by local municipalities to their staff can accomplish that.

We implore you to consider local governments as your strongest link in accomplishing this goal of mass vaccination and the reopening of our schools and communities.

Respectfully,

**The Acushnet Board of Selectmen**

*Kevin A. Gaspar, Sr., Chairman*

*David Desroches*

*David E. Wojnar*

**Acushnet Fire Chief**

*Kevin Gallagher*

**Superintendent of Schools**

*Paula J. Bailey, Ed. D.*

**School Business Manager**

*Kristin Flynn*

**Emergency Management Director**

*Gerard A. Bergeron*

**Town Administrator**

*Julie Hebert, Esq.*

**The Acushnet Board of Health**

*David M. Davignon, Chairman*

*Robert Medeiros*

*Thomas Fortin*

**Board of Health Agent**

*Joseph Correia*

**Council on Aging Director**

*Heather Sylvia*

cc: The Honorable Karyn Polito, Lieutenant Governor of the Commonwealth  
Secretary Marylou Sudders, Executive Office of Health and Human Services  
Senator Mark Montigny  
Representative Christopher Hendricks