December 3, 2020

The Honorable Charles D. Baker
Massachusetts State House
24 Beacon Street, Office of the Governor, Room 280
Boston, MA. 02133

Re: COVID-19 Vaccine Distribution Plan; Adoption of ACIP Phase 1a Recommendations, Home Care Workers

Dear Governor Baker,

On behalf of the Home Care Alliance of Massachusetts, and its membership, we are writing to you today in support of the Centers for Disease Control’s (CDC) Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices (ACIP) decision on December 1 to prioritize health care workers for Phase 1A vaccine access. This includes providers of health care services in the home.

Annually in Massachusetts, certified home health agencies deploy over 8,000 direct-care professionals who make over 12 million home health visits to 250,000 Massachusetts Medicare beneficiaries. Additionally, as part of the state’s Home Care Program, home care providers help keep over 60,000 older adults safe at home per year. These figures do not even account for the tens of thousands of consumers receiving supportive home care services paid for out-of-pocket.

The very nature of delivering care in the home, whether complex skilled nursing, therapy, or non-medical personal care, puts the workforce and clients at increased risk. It is also important to consider that this workforce delivers care in multiple homes on a single day, as well as in many cases, multiple settings (nursing homes, assisted living facilities, and inpatient hospice facilities) per day.

As you know, critical to maintaining adequate in-patient hospital capacity is reducing community spread. Ensuring that the home care workforce has priority access to the COVID-19 Vaccine will keep workers and the vulnerable population they serve, safe. It will also reduce community spread and alleviate potential burden on in-patient settings.

For these reasons it is imperative that the Commonwealth adopt the ACIP recommendation to include home-based health care workers in Vaccine Distribution Phase 1a.

Thank you for your consideration of this important request.

Sincerely,

Pat Kelleher
Executive Director
Home Care Alliance of Massachusetts

Deborah Costello
President, Board of Directors
Home Care Alliance of Massachusetts