



**FIRE  
MARSHALS  
ASSOCIATION OF  
MINNESOTA**



To: Governor and MDH Commissioner

From: Minnesota Fire Chiefs Association and Minnesota Fire Department Association

Re: First Responder COVID Vaccine Priority

We have been made aware that first responders (emergency medical service providers, firefighters, and police officers) may not be considered as the top priority (1A) for the COVID-19 vaccine when it becomes available in Minnesota in the coming weeks. It is our strong belief that first responders should be in the top priority category to receive the vaccines along with in-hospital providers.

First responders are called to stabilize any situation – including being the first care team to evaluate and treat many patients. These emergency professionals enter situations with little to no information about the individuals who need emergency care. Often, this means first responders are exposed to COVID-19 positive individuals unbeknownst to them as they perform emergency medical treatment.

During the pandemic thus far, 99 of the 498 fire departments reporting across the state have had COVID-19 outbreaks. This number is rapidly increasing and the ability for many departments to respond to emergencies is on the verge of collapsing.

We fully agree that the healthcare professionals who work in hospitals and long-term care facilities should be in the top priority (1A) category for COVID-19 vaccination. However, first responders are also part of our state's healthcare infrastructure. First responders provide care to patients before they arrive at the hospital, where they are subsequently treated by doctors, nurses, and other medical personnel. Without a fully-immunized healthcare infrastructure in our state, we cannot begin to stabilize the COVID-19 pandemic in Minnesota.

Accordingly, as the first care team involved in a medical crisis, first responders should fall into the same category as in-hospital providers as it relates to vaccination priority.

We believe that it is of the utmost importance that these first responders are vaccinated as soon as possible. First responders carry out the safety net services within a community that provide for the health and welfare of its citizens. We cannot risk straining that essential safety net to the breaking point and need to maintain the ability to continue reliably serving the citizens in our local communities.

We urge you to ensure that all first responders are placed into the 1A vaccine category and that they have access to the COVID-19 vaccine as soon as possible.

December 1, 2020

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "T. John C." in a cursive style.

John Cunningham – MSFCA President

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Mark Rosenblum" in a cursive style.

Mark Rosenblum – MSFDA President

December 1, 2020