



**UNITE
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February 17, 2021

Governor Andrew Cuomo, Chair
Governor Asa Hutchinson, Vice Chair
National Governors Association
444 North Capitol Street NW #267
Washington, DC 20001

Re: Prioritizing hotel employees in distribution of the COVID-19 vaccine

Dear Chair Cuomo and Vice Chair Hutchinson,

On behalf of the domestic hotel industry and our more than 2.3 million direct employees and the over 8 million jobs our industry supports, we appreciate your ongoing leadership and efforts to protect the public as we continue to battle this unprecedented public health crisis.

As the rollout of the COVID-19 vaccine continues across the nation, we are pleased to see states taking critical steps towards ending the pandemic. As governors and state public health agencies continue their COVID-19 vaccine distribution plans, we urge states to prioritize hotel employees for inclusion in phase “1b” of the vaccination rollout, or the appropriate corresponding phase for essential workers in your state.

The Cybersecurity and Infrastructure Security Agency (CISA), a division of the Department of Homeland Security (DHS), classifies essential workers as “workers who conduct a range of operations and services that are typically essential to continued infrastructure viability.” CISA identifies “management and staff at hotels and other temporary lodging facilities that provide for COVID-19 mitigation, containment, and treatment measures or provide accommodations for essential workers” as essential workers. **Hotels have been utilized as places to quarantine for many during the pandemic and helped support all levels of government by opening our doors to first responders and medical professionals for a place to stay closer to their hospital or place work as they provide around-the-clock care to patients.**

Hotel employees also remain on the frontlines, and each day that they come to work, they welcome both global and domestic travelers increasing their likelihood of contracting the virus. While hotels have protocols in place to ensure limited contact between employees and guests, prioritizing employees with access to the vaccine would provide another layer of protection.

Additionally, given their often close proximity to hospitals and critical infrastructure such as airports and interstates as well as being a part of communities in all fifty states, hotels have been utilized during vaccine distribution and continue to work with multiple states to be used as mass distribution sites as the rollout continues, therefore increasing the need for vaccine distribution among hotel employees.

Travel and tourism are critical drivers of the American economy, and while travel demand has hit record lows, ensuring hotel employees are prioritized during the vaccine rollout will help keep both employees and guests safe when it becomes safe to travel and resume meetings and events once again.

As an industry of people taking care of people, the hotel industry has taken steps to support and strengthen communities during this public health crisis. We ask that the employees who power our industry are prioritized during phase “1b” of the vaccine roll out.

Once again, we thank you for your support, and we ask that you prioritize hotel employees as states finalize recommendations for COVID-19 vaccine distribution.

Sincerely,



Chip Rogers
President and CEO
American Hotel and Lodging Association



D. Taylor
International President
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CC: Governors of the United States
Dr. Jose R. Romero, Chair, CDC Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices
Dr. Amanda Cohn, Executive Secretary, CDC Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices