



People with developmental disabilities need vaccine priority!

California's continuing to get vaccines distributed, based on a special set of priority "phases." It started with "Phase 1A," which included health care workers and first responders.

But people with developmental disabilities weren't part of that group. Even though they are often at extra risk because of their disability (or disabilities), the state still hasn't moved our community up the list.

YOU can help change this! We need to let Governor Newsom know that people with disabilities should be put in the very next group, "Phase 1B." When you do:

1. Introduce yourself! Be sure to say if you have a disability, are a family member, or work in the community.
2. Explain that people with disabilities are at extra risk due to COVID-19, and need to be prioritized in Phase 1B.
3. Thank them for considering our community.

A sample letter is also provided, which you can copy and paste in your email. But personalizing your message is **always** better!



To contact Governor Newsom, use the [official online contact form](#). Choose "COVID-19" as your subject in the drop-down box on that page.

SAMPLE LETTER

Honorable Governor Newsom,

Many people with developmental disabilities are at extra risk from COVID because of their disability. For instance, COVID can be 10 times more deadly for people with Down Syndrome. Because of this risk, it is critical that vaccines be prioritized for this community.

Currently, the state has prioritized people who live in institutional settings to get the vaccine. But most people with developmental disabilities live in the community, not institutional settings. This is both personal choice and a state goal. They get special services that make this possible. The biggest difference between these two groups is where they live. Their health risk factors are the same, and it is important that people with similar needs get similar treatment.

To make it clear that people with developmental disabilities should be prioritized for vaccines, I support a new definition being added to the vaccine priority list: “people with disabilities who receive services that allow them to stay out of institutional settings.” This matches with a federal definition of “Home and Community-Based Services.” It will make it easy to ensure that this at-risk population can get the protection they need.

Thank you for considering our community in Phase 1B of the COVID vaccine.

Sincerely,

ARCA and the regional centers are working with community partners to help get our community prioritized for vaccinations. Yesterday, we co-sponsored a town hall webinar with Disability Voices United, the State Council on Developmental Disabilities, and Disability Rights California.