

Congress of the United States
House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

February 24, 2021

The Honorable Denis McDonough
Secretary of Veterans Affairs
810 Vermont Avenue, NW
Washington, DC 20420

Dear Secretary McDonough:

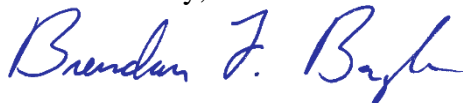
I am writing to express my grave concern regarding the COVID-19 vaccine distribution at the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA). Since the VA first began administering vaccines late last year, I have heard from numerous veterans in my district about their inability to receive the vaccine at VA Medical Centers.

As you know, a large number Veterans do not currently qualify to receive COVID-19 vaccinations from the VA given income requirements that were established as part of a decades' old rule. The rule, enacted in 2006, mandates that Veterans who are not already receiving regular treatment from the VA are not eligible for any Veterans Health Administration (VHA) care unless their income is less than a set threshold, dependent on place of residence. As a result, countless Veterans are being turned away from this critical vaccination program that has the potential to save lives.

This is why I am urging the Department of Veterans Affairs to take swift action to ensure that as many Veterans as possible are able to receive the COVID-19 vaccine at VA Medical Centers, regardless of VHA eligibility or income requirements. I believe that the unprecedented circumstances surrounding the COVID-19 pandemic make clear that a change or exception of the 2006 rule is necessary so that all Veterans can easily access the care they need from the VHA.

Now more than ever, it is crucial that we work together and support the millions of brave men and women who have put their lives on the line to protect our country. Veterans in Philadelphia and across the nation are depending on us to make this minor, but necessary, change that has the potential to positively impact the lives of so many of our Veterans. Thank you for your consideration of this time-sensitive and important matter.

Sincerely,



Brendan F. Boyle
Member of Congress