



TO: Members of the National Governors Association

DATE: January 28, 2021

**AMERICANS WITH TYPE 1 DIABETES
NEED EQUAL COVID-19 VACCINE STATUS**

There are 1.6 million Americans with type 1 diabetes (T1D) – and almost all of them are watching and waiting to find out when they will be able to receive the COVID-19 vaccine. As a high-risk group, people with T1D want to be categorized for vaccine distribution equitably with other vulnerable populations who are also disproportionately affected by COVID-19.

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) guidelines on vaccine priority rightly identify diabetes as a high risk factor for severe complications from COVID-19. Unfortunately, CDC guidelines do not reflect current understanding about risks and outcomes for people with T1D versus type 2 diabetes (T2D).

Published data confirm that people with diabetes have a 3-4x higher risk of severe illness or hospitalization from COVID-19, compared to someone without diabetes. It is the underlying condition of diabetes that matters, irrespective of whether it is T1D or T2D.

While most states prioritize people with underlying medical conditions, many states continue to follow outdated vaccination guidance by the CDC that people with T2D “are” at increased risk, but people with T1D “might be.” We now know that is not the case. **People with T1D need equal access to the COVID-19 vaccine.**

The [Diabetes Leadership Council \(DLC\)](#) recently joined [18 other national health organizations](#) asking the CDC to update its guidance according to the published studies, and provided additional comments to the agency’s [Advisory Council on Immunization Practices](#).

We are calling upon the nation’s governors and state health authorities to act. [Montana](#) and [Tennessee](#) have already raised the priority level for people with T1D. **We urge all governors to join them today and provide equal protection for all at risk people with diabetes.**

Cc: Governor Ned Lamont of Connecticut and Governor Bill Lee of Tennessee, co-chairs of the NGA Pandemic and Disaster Response Task Force

DLC is a 501(c)(3) patient advocacy organization comprised of individuals who combine their passion for advocacy with decades of diabetes experience and leadership to advance patients-first policies at the local, state and national levels. Our members – all former leaders of national diabetes organizations – engage policymakers, and public and private sector influencers to call attention to the diabetes epidemic and provide a voice for 34 million Americans living with the disease.