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February 12, 2021

US Centers for Disease Control and Prevention
Director Rochelle Walensky
395 E Street, SW Suite 9100
Washington DC 20201

Director Walensky,

I am writing on behalf of many of my constituents to encourage you to swiftly issue guidance for Americans who have received the full dosage required of the 2019 novel coronavirus disease (COVID-19) vaccine. The COVID-19 pandemic has been a trying time, especially for isolated senior adults. The federal government should be proactive in the provision of clear guidelines on next-steps for their continued safety and wellbeing after all available preventative measures are in place.

From the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic, we knew senior adults and those with certain immunosuppressive conditions are at a greater risk for COVID-19 infection and possible complications. Therefore, millions of senior Americans have been isolated in their homes or in long-term care facilities to shield themselves from possible infection outside their doors. Additionally, thousands have unfortunately passed away alone with no family members around. While it is certainly important to protect our nation's most vulnerable from a potentially deadly disease, with vaccines now available, it is crucial that seniors' physical, mental, and spiritual health all be taken into consideration and that steps be taken so that they can physically engage with their loved ones.

As you are well aware, seniors in long-term living situations such as nursing homes and assisted living facilities across the country are rightfully first on the list to receive the COVID-19 vaccine. While vaccine rollout is still underway, over one million Americans are currently being vaccinated daily. Our nation will soon reach a point where long-term care facility residents and other senior adults have completed the COVID-19 vaccine two-dose regimen. We urge the CDC to proactively prepare for this point by issuing guidance on isolation and family gatherings after the vaccine has been administered.

The completion of a vaccine regimen has been the light at the end of a long, dark tunnel for many Americans. Many seniors are crossing the finish line of their race toward vaccination. They believed, right or wrong, that this accomplishment would open doors to safely gather with family members and return to some public activities. Currently, there is no guidance, only silence. After losing friends and enduring prolonged separation from loved ones, isolation after vaccination is an additional devastation to an already fragile population.

I am asking the CDC to issue clear and concise guidance that provides clarity to the millions of senior Americans who have endured more isolation than any other population. I believe this is essential to the mental health and overall wellbeing of already-vaccinated seniors.

In God We Trust,



JAMES LANKFORD
United States Senator

CC: US Department of Health and Human Services, Acting Secretary Norris Cochran