



TEXAS APARTMENT ASSOCIATION

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January 6, 2021

Dr. John Hellerstedt
Commissioner
Texas Department of State Health Services
PO Box 149347
Austin, Texas 78714-9347

Sent via email

Dear Dr. Hellerstedt:

On behalf of the Texas Apartment Association (TAA), thank you for your leadership to protect Texas residents during the pandemic. Now that we are entering the next phase of the COVID-19 vaccination program, I am writing to respectfully urge that you prioritize vaccination of property management staff as essential workers. In particular, the work that leasing office staff and maintenance technicians do is critical to keep members of their community housed during these challenging.

By way of background, TAA represents more than 12,000 members who serve more than 4.6 million residents. As you work with the Expert Vaccine Allocation Panel to decide how to distribute the state's vaccine allocation, we urge you to consider the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) [COVID-19 Vaccination Program Interim Playbook for Jurisdiction Operations](#), which recommends “[p]eople who play a key role in keeping essential functions of society running and cannot socially distance in the workplace” for the first available doses and cites [Cybersecurity and Infrastructure Security Agency \(CISA\) guidance](#) to identify critical populations of essential workers that should be prioritized.

CISA guidance acknowledges that apartment communities are part of our nation's critical infrastructure and the essential work that rental housing professionals provide, including:

- Workers responsible for the leasing of residential properties to provide individuals and families with ready access to available housing.
- Workers responsible for handling property management, maintenance, and related service calls who can coordinate the response to emergency “at-home” situations requiring immediate attention, as well as facilitate the reception of deliveries, mail, and other necessary services.

To protect the safety of rental housing professionals as well as the residents that they serve, it is vital that property management staff receive prioritization for the COVID-19 vaccine. Their duties often make social distancing impossible, increasing their risk of exposure to the virus. They also work to ensure that residents who live in high-density apartment communities are protected from further spread of COVID-19.

Thank you for your consideration. Please contact me with any questions or requests.

Sincerely,

Chris Newton
Executive Vice President