

Isaiah Rumlin
President

NATIONAL ASSOCIATION FOR THE ADVANCEMENT OF COLORED PEOPLE

JACKSONVILLE BRANCH

Beaver Street Enterprise Center
1225 W. Beaver Street, Suite 112 • Jacksonville, Florida 32204
(904) 265-4702
Email: jaxnaacp@comcast.net

Sent via email

February 9, 2021

Mayor Lenny Curry
Jacksonville City Hall
117 W. Duval St., Suite 400
Jacksonville, FL 32202

President Tommy Hazouri
Jacksonville City Council
117 W. Duval St., Suite 425
Jacksonville, FL 32202

Dear Mayor Curry & Council President Hazouri:

In an attempt to mitigate the loss of life due to COVID-19 disease and focus resources on our most vulnerable citizens, the Mayor's Administration and City Council Members, with emphasis on Districts 7,8,9 &10 and areas of Arlington and Southside should come together with Community Organizations, Medical Organizations and Representatives from the Hospital Community. The purpose of this meeting is to plan, develop and implement transparent local strategies and coordinate the most effective Vaccination Campaign efforts.

The plan when and if established must consider equity as a primary driver. Statistics show COVID-19 has disproportionately affected low-income neighborhoods and all communities of color. These are the very communities being impacted the most by the Pandemic. Thus far these areas have not been and are not being prioritized for COVID-19 vaccine administration. The Curry Administration and City Council Members who represent these communities should reach out to aggressively and with urgency to vaccinate these communities. To date, we have heard little from the Administration and these Council Members regarding COVID-19 vaccine immunizations.

This lack of involvement by our elected officials has allowed the ugly stain of health inequity to flourish in Florida's largest city. The COVID-19 pandemic provides an opportunity for clinicians, health systems, scientists, and policymakers to address these health disparities. Our politicians must publicly engage our Black and Hispanic resident's concerns and advocate to make vaccination sites more accessible to those communities at the highest risk of morbidity and mortality from this deadly disease.

Our Consortium recognizes that the Mayor's Administration and certain City Council Members have initiated one vaccination program site located in a Predominantly Black neighborhood. News reports indicate that it is restricted to 950 doses and administered two (2) days last week (which is consistent with the continued failure of the Mayor and some City Council Members to adopt a comprehensive plan).

The Mayor's Administration is providing inadequate availability of vaccines while closing a major COVID-19 testing site located at the Clanzel T. Brown Community Center. A Press Conference was held by the Mayor and some City Council Members with no attempt to explain why testing no longer was being provided at Clanzel T. Brown Community nor the limited availability of vaccines in a part of the Northwest Section of the City (when more COVID-19 supplies become available).

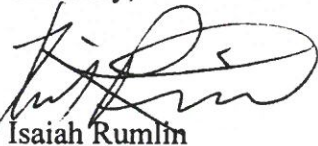
The Mayor and the City Council Members should collaborate and communicate with the previously mentioned organizations to ensure that the public is made aware and informed of the following issues:

1. What is the Target Population Vaccination?
2. Who is the entity that is Providing the vaccination services?
3. What are their certifications?
4. Who credentialed the entity?
5. Are they CDC cleared to provide vaccines?
6. How many African Americans are employed to provide the vaccines?
7. Do they have the infrastructure to ascertain that the vaccine is still viable?
8. Do they have the capacity for accurate record keeping?

We have other concerns as to vaccination site determination: for example, what parameters are being used to select site locations, geographic radius, population-based, health zones (note: Districts 7,8,9 &10 and areas of Arlington and Southside especially)?

In conclusion, these questions point out the simple fact of COJ ELECTED OFFICIALS have displayed lack of transparency and have failed to engage health services experts, which puts communities of color at continued increased risk of morbidity and mortality from COVID-19.

Sincerely,



Isaiah Rumlin
President, Jacksonville Branch NAACP



Dr. Rogers Cain, MD
President, Northeast Florida Medical Society Foundation



Dr. Richard Danford
President, Jacksonville Urban League



Gayle Mebane, MSN/Ed, RN
First Coast Black Nurses Association
Public Relations, Co-Chair