



Governor DeWine,

As leaders of the Human Service Chamber of Franklin County and the Human Services Chamber of Hamilton County, we are writing today to thank you for your continued leadership and partnership through the coronavirus crisis, as well as to advocate for the agencies we serve on the “other” frontlines of this pandemic at our health and human services agencies.

When you prudently issued an executive order in March to help Ohio come together in flattening the curve, your clear understanding of the imperative of the work our members do was underscored by defining our sector as an essential service that had to continue operating.

“Organizations that provide charitable and social services. Businesses and religious and secular nonprofit organizations, including food banks, when providing food, shelter, and social services, and other necessities of life for economically disadvantaged or otherwise needy individuals, individuals who need assistance as a result of this emergency, and people with disabilities.”

This broad definition includes each of our nearly 180 member organizations, which provide a diverse array of services: from congregate housing for seniors, to homeless shelters, to a range of physical and behavioral healthcare, child care, immigration services, and more.

We are writing to humbly request that this same definition be applied as the state--and local health authorities--identify the prioritization of vaccinations for all Ohioans.

We are grateful that many of our members are already included in Phase 1A, and we hope that everyone else will be included in Phases 1B and 2, due to the unique importance and unique health risk our members’ staff and clients take every day while this pandemic rages on.

While we appreciate the numerous complexities and nuances of this ever-functional health emergency, we certainly understand the importance of prioritization even within these phases. Accordingly, we hope that our agencies with the most daily exposure--homeless shelters, addiction centers, child care providers, for example--may be higher on any sub-prioritization within Phases 1A, 1B, and 2.

Further, we pledge to work with the State, as well as with our local health authorities, to be of whatever assistance we can--with messaging amplification, as well as with vaccine determinations and distribution, or however else we may be of service.

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