



# CAPTAIN

Community Human Services

*Lifting people up. Building brighter futures.*

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February 3, 2021

The Honorable Andrew M. Cuomo  
Governor of New York State  
State Capitol Building  
Albany, NY 12224

Dr. Howard Zucker  
Commissioner, NYS Department of Health  
Corning Tower, Empire State Plaza  
Albany, NY 12237

Dear Governor Cuomo and Commissioner Zucker,

On behalf of CAPTAIN Community Human Services, our board, staff, volunteers, and the hundreds of clients who access our Emergency Food and Hygiene Pantry services each month, I write to urge the inclusion of food pantry workers and volunteers in Phase 1B of New York's COVID vaccine rollout.

Pantry staff and volunteers are on the frontlines, working in direct contact with many high-risk members of the public from the very start of the pandemic. Throughout the pandemic, they have been considered essential workers and remained on-site, selfless working to safely provide food and assistance for our most vulnerable.

In many ways, pantry staff and volunteers have greater interaction with high-risk members of the public than grocery store workers, including the delivery of food to homebound seniors. Quite a number of the newer clients to our services arrived at our door when they could no longer work due to underlying medical conditions that made them too high-risk to remain at in-person employment.

As food pantry staff and volunteers have been considered essential in every other facet of New York's COVID safety plans, I respectfully request that status extend to their eligibility for Phase 1B of the vaccine distribution.

I'm happy to provide further details on our position. You can reach me at 518-399-4624 or via email at [andy@captaincares.org](mailto:andy@captaincares.org).

Thank you for your consideration of this urgent request.

With warm regards,

Andy Gilpin  
Executive Director

cc: The Hon. James Tedisco, New York State Senator  
The Hon. Mary Beth Walsh, New York State Assemblywoman  
The Hon. Carrie Woerner, New York State Assemblywoman