

Speaker Wants Health Committee To Continue COVID Oversight

By Administrator

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A letter sent by Speaker Tim Moore (R-Cleveland) to members of the House Health Committee urged the panel to continue oversight of North Carolina's COVID-19 vaccine distribution process as the legislature returns to work this week. Speaker Moore wrote at length about concerns raised by local health officials and providers, telling committee members that "the shifting priorities of the Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) are marginalizing rural communities where residents lack mobility."

"Local health departments, including my own in Cleveland County, have expressed concerns that the shifting priorities of the Department of Health and Human Services are marginalizing rural communities where residents lack mobility, particularly among elderly populations," Speaker Moore wrote to the committee Tuesday.

"County leaders have complained of receiving conflicting information regarding distribution plans and the size of vaccine deliveries. Secretary Mandy Cohen apologized directly to county health departments for this lack of transparency and communication this week, but further action is needed."

"This inconsistency puts our local health departments in an impossible position, damaging the credibility of state and county officials with citizens who rely on them for critical information about this process. I hear concerns from county officials that they are given limited information from DHHS, but are then expected to dialogue directly with North Carolinians without any answers to their concerns."

"Significant concerns were also raised by healthcare institutions in our state this week with the changes to vaccine supply chain management implemented by DHHS. As DHHS has now announced further reforms to their protocols in response to those concerns, the work of the House Health Committee is vital to ensure their response does not further exacerbate an urban-rural divide."

A joint House and Senate healthcare committee of the General Assembly met previously on January 13 to seek answers regarding the administration's shifting distribution plans.