



**UNITED ASSOCIATION**  
of Journeymen & Apprentices of the  
**PLUMBING & PIPEFITTING**  
Industry of the United States and Canada  
Local Union 170 – Affiliated with AFL-CIO-CFL

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**Thomas Guerrero**  
**Executive Director Patient and Client Relations/  
Corporate Issues & Client Relations**  
Ministry of Health  
PO Box 9050 Stn Prov Govt  
Victoria BC V8W 9E2

**Re: Vaccine Prioritization for BC's Construction Workforce**

Dear Mr. Guerrero,

Thank you for your email of February 18, 2021, sent on behalf of the Honourable Adrian Dix, Minister of Health, outlining the Ministry's COVID-19 Immunization Plan.

Your email indicates that the first phase of the Plan is focused on immunizing those who are most vulnerable to severe illness and death, including long term care residents and “the health care workers who care for them”. As I outlined in my letter of December 19, 2020, our members specialize in the trades of Plumbing, Sprinklerfitting, Steamfitting and Welding. Our service technician members work right alongside health care workers in maintaining, servicing and modernizing long-term care facilities, hospitals, clinics and places of work for health care professionals. More concerning, is the fact that many of our members travel from facility to facility on a daily basis, providing these critical services to several institutions. It is inexplicable to me as to why they are excluded from the initial phases of the Immunization Plan. For their safety, as well as the safety of patients, residents and other health care workers, they must be prioritized for COVID-19 vaccination.

I also strongly suggest that you review the prioritization of all essential workers; in particular, those in the construction industry. While I understand that the current Immunization Plan based on age stems from scientific and expert evidence, this evidence is incomplete and still evolving. The recent modelling study (Canadian Press – February 24, 2021) published by Simon Fraser's University (Mathematics, Genomics, Prediction in Infection and Evolution) indicates that vaccination plans that prioritize essential workers (which our members have been deemed) would be more effective. It is our essential workers who are mobile, have greater contacts with others, cannot distance as part of their job, and are the greatest source of transmission to our elderly and vulnerable populations. Our construction and industrial jobsites, where our members must often work in confined and smaller spaces, are particularly susceptible to outbreaks. With the arrival of the new highly transmissible variants, vaccinating these workers has never been more critical.

I want to extend our appreciation to the provincial government and health ministry for your continued efforts in managing the COVID-19 pandemic. I urge you to consider the request on behalf of our membership to prioritize vaccines to our members who work alongside our health care workers, and to all those that have been deemed essential and continue to provide critical services during this crisis.

I would appreciate a meeting to discuss this urgent request and can be contacted at any time to provide further details if required.

Sincerely,

A.D. Al Phillips, RSE  
Business Manager & Financial Secretary