

United States Senate

April 6, 2021

The Honorable Lloyd J. Austin
Secretary of Defense
1000 Defense Pentagon
Washington D.C. 20301-1000

Dear Secretary Austin,

I am writing today to inquire as to the procedures the Department of Defense has established for the vaccination of individuals located at U.S. military facilities abroad. As you well know, these installations are home to not only servicemembers but also their dependents, foreign nationals, civilian employees of the Department and other U.S. government personnel. While the vaccination effort is well underway domestically, I am concerned that those Americans serving abroad will be left behind on vaccination efforts – and this is a concern I have heard from Michiganders as well. Many of these installations are located in areas which continue to suffer from high rates of COVID-19 infections and are struggling with their own vaccine distribution efforts.

At your earliest convenience please answer the following questions:

1. What is your communications strategy to ensure servicemembers, their dependents and civilian employees, both American and foreign nationals, are kept informed as to the availability of the vaccine at their local installation?
2. What is the procedure by which servicemembers, their dependents and civilian employees, are able to schedule and receive a vaccine? How are you communicating this procedure to the above groups?
3. What is the level of cooperation between the Department of Defense and the Department of Health and Human Services and Department of State as you work to provide vaccines to Americans stationed at Department of Defense facilities abroad?

4. What is current procedure for vaccinating foreign nationals who are employed at U.S. installations abroad? For foreign servicemembers who are stationed at these facilities? How are you communicating this procedure to the above groups?
5. What mitigation efforts are in place to prevent visiting servicemembers, both American and foreign, from spreading COVID-19 at installations while the vaccination process is unfolding?
6. What is the criteria being used to determine the order in which individuals at these installations will be vaccinated?
7. Is there currently a plan, where safety and logistics permit, to vaccinate servicemembers and civilian employees serving in combat zones?

Our brave men and women and their families are serving abroad in defense of our nation, our freedoms and our values. Ensuring they are vaccinated against this virus not only protects them, but also better prepares servicemembers to continue their service safely and effectively. I appreciate your response to my questions and thank you – and the men and women who serve under you –for your service to our country.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Gary C. Peters". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first letters of each name being capitalized and prominent.

Gary C. Peters
United States Senator