



STATE OF RHODE ISLAND
OFFICE OF GOVERNOR DANIEL J. MCKEE

December 15, 2021

The Honorable Deanne Criswell
Administrator
Federal Emergency Management Agency
500 C Street S.W.
Washington, D.C. 20472

Dear Administrator Criswell:

I want to begin by thanking the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) for its continued partnership and support throughout the pandemic. FEMA has been essential to Rhode Island's vaccination campaign and efforts to keep residents safe.

Prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, Rhode Island's hospitals and health care facilities faced major staffing challenges. The pandemic has exacerbated these issues, leading to bed shortages and hospital diversions at the State's acute care facilities and an even more emergent workforce shortage due to pandemic stress and burnout. In recent weeks, the number of COVID-19 cases and hospitalizations has dramatically increased. As a result, Rhode Island's hospitals are reporting that their emergency departments are at capacity and that patients are leaving without being evaluated, and that 7 of the 10 acute care hospitals are reaching maximum capacity, necessitating the diversion of patients to other hospitals.

I write today to request FEMA medical personnel to assist in the State's efforts to address staffing shortages within our hospital system. Currently, the Rhode Island Emergency Management Agency (RIEMA) is working closely with local hospital leadership to swiftly complete the FEMA Resource Request Forms process and our RIEMA Director is in contact with FEMA Region 1 regarding our request.

Additionally, we are also working closely with the Rhode Island Department of Health to implement a comprehensive set of actions to address the increased number of COVID-19 cases and alleviate pressure on our hospital system. Our focus is on vaccination, testing, masking and staffing capacity. We are requesting FEMA's support in addressing staffing challenges to help ensure Rhode Islanders can access the critical care they need. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,



Daniel J. McKee
Governor