I am writing to you on behalf of the Wisconsin Library Association and its members to ask that librarians and library workers in public, academic, and special libraries be included in state and local Phase 1b of vaccine distribution plans to protect staff and minimize risk to patrons and users.

The SDMAC's recommendations on January 13th listed public facing essential workers be included in Phase 1b, and essential workers would include education workers. The Wisconsin Library Association affirms that library staff fit both criteria. Furthermore, the CDC's Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices (ACIP) July 2020 working group report had included librarians in its definition of "essential workers". Librarians and library workers were identified as among the "workers at greatest risk for exposure to infectious diseases" and among those whose "occupational groups most likely to be exposed to infection or disease more than one time per month". The ACIP Interim Guidance grouped all "education, training, and library" workers alongside healthcare practitioners and technical, healthcare support, protective services, personal care and service, and community support workers as "essential".

It is important for state and local public health officials to recognize that public, academic, and special libraries perform regular and necessary "frontline services" every day. State and local vaccination plans should consider both the nature of the work librarians do as well as the clear social and educational benefits that libraries accrue. Including librarians and library workers in the Phase 1b of distribution plan will allow our sector to fully reopen public libraries to public service and campus libraries to all students while protecting staff and vulnerable populations. Waiting to inoculate librarians and library workers will continue to put our colleagues on the front lines to unnecessary risk and delay significant benefits to our society.

The CDC's "COVID-19 Vaccination Program Interim Playbook" from October 2020 has identified libraries as appropriate and eligible sites for vaccination administration mobile clinics. This follows earlier guidance from the CDC that libraries should be considered by local health officials for mobile COVID testing sites as well. The CDC has also recognized that libraries, as trusted anchor institutions, should play an important role in sharing accurate information about approved vaccines and community vaccination activities. Hosting both mobile testing sites and vaccination clinics at the library lowers barriers to healthcare for many patrons and neighbors. Providing Phase 1b vaccinations to all library workers, staff, and librarians not only protects individuals and mitigates our collective risk, but it also helps to legitimize the perception of vaccines as a core component of public health services.

We are calling on you to include librarians and library workers in the Phase 1b vaccination plans. Libraries are eager to help our state and we welcome any questions you may have or ideas on how we can help during this time.

Thank you for your consideration,

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