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October 14, 2021

Rochelle Walensky, MD, MPH  
Director  
Centers for Disease Control and Prevention  
1600 Clifton Rd.  
Atlanta, GA 30333

Dear Dr. Walensky,

I write you seeking a clear answer from the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) on which vaccines the United States will accept when our borders reopen to all fully vaccinated travelers later next month.

On October 14, the U.S. Department of Homeland Security (DHS) announced that all non-essential travelers who have been fully vaccinated for COVID-19 and have the appropriate documentation will be allowed to enter the United States at all land ports of entry beginning sometime in November. This is welcome news for border communities like mine. In Western New York, we have essentially been cut off from our Canadian neighbors for the duration of the pandemic.

However, clarity is needed on which vaccines the United States will accept when the border reopens to all fully vaccinated Canadians. Nearly four million Canadians, equivalent to ten percent of their fully vaccinated population, have received mixed doses of the available mRNA COVID-19 vaccines – this includes the AstraZeneca vaccine.<sup>1</sup> At present, the AstraZeneca vaccine does not appear on the CDC's list of approved and authorized vaccines for use in the United States and the CDC website recommends against mixing doses of mRNA COVID-19 vaccines.<sup>2</sup>

It is my understanding that the CDC will develop guidelines on which vaccines will be accepted. The prospect of millions of Canadian travelers being indefinitely denied access to the United States because they received mixed doses of the mRNA COVID-19 vaccine is deeply concerning. After more than nineteen months of separation, border communities are desperate to reunite with their loved ones in Canada and the United States. Our livelihoods and way of life depend on the free flow of goods, services, and people across the border – often multiple times per day.

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<sup>1</sup> Government of Canada, COVID-19 Vaccination in Canada <https://health-infobase.canada.ca/covid-19/vaccination-coverage/#a6>

<sup>2</sup> US Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, Interchangeability of COVID-19 Vaccine Products [https://www.cdc.gov/vaccines/covid-19/clinical-considerations/covid-19-vaccines-us.html?CDC\\_AA\\_refVal=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.cdc.gov%2Fvaccines%2F%2Fclinical-considerations/covid-19%2Finfo-by-product%2Fclinical-considerations.html](https://www.cdc.gov/vaccines/covid-19/clinical-considerations/covid-19-vaccines-us.html?CDC_AA_refVal=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.cdc.gov%2Fvaccines%2F%2Fclinical-considerations/covid-19%2Finfo-by-product%2Fclinical-considerations.html)

The uncertainty facing American border communities and millions of Canadians can be immediately resolved by clear guidance from the CDC on which vaccines will be accepted by customs and border officials as well as if mixed doses will count towards those requirements. Thank you for your consideration on this urgent matter and I look forward to your timely response.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Brian Higgins". The signature is written in a cursive style with a horizontal line at the end.

Brian Higgins  
Member of Congress