

January 17, 2022

Dear Members of the Montgomery County Council, Maryland

I respectfully request that you vote against the County Executive's proposed vaccine passport for Montgomery County.

First and foremost, this legislation would single out a portion of County residents to be treated inequitably. This inequity would result in enacting discriminatory legislation.

The institution of a vaccine passport is not supported by science or data. The vaccines only reduce the severity of COVID-19 and does not prevent transmission which both the Delta and recent Omicron variant have demonstrated. Vaccinated persons continue to contract COVID-19, personally I was less than one month "fully" vaccinated and contracted it. New York instituted a vaccine passport in August 2021 and added 5 to 11 years old when they became eligible for emergency use. Reviewing the aggregate reported cases between January 1-10, 2022 for New York and Montgomery County cases totaled 3.7% versus 2.8% respectfully of their population. The data shows that the vaccine passport did not prevent transmission of the Omicron variant.

A vaccine passport is way to legislate a mandate for Montgomery County. The County boasts the highest vaccination rate in the country so a passport/mandate is an overreach of County authority and infringes on personal rights. COVID-19 has been active for 2 years and there have been at least 33 COVID-19 variants (December 2021, WHO's number of variants identified), we are no longer in a crisis. COVID-19 is a form of coronavirus, just like the common cold and since it has mutated more than once a month since December 2019 the focus needs to shift to COVID-19 being endemic like the flu and colds.

The County's focus on mandating vaccination through institution of a passport will add additional job duties to residents who already work on the lower end of the pay scale because the County expects them to enforce and ask strangers about their personal health information. If the County wants the legislation enforced, then the County must provide the resources to enforce the legislation (i.e., hire staff).

The County must provide more transparent data, in aggregate form of course. The current data - number of cases, deaths, and hospitalizations is inadequate. Additional data about where transmission is occurring, what circumstances lead to severe illness would educate County residents and allow them to make informed decisions. Persons with certain existing medical conditions are more likely to experience severe COVID-19 and hospitalization. Providing residents with specific information that can be applied to their personal health status would allow residents to take action to protect themselves. To date, all information provided has been generalized. A direct and blunt approach needs to be taken in order to protect our vulnerable residents. The American Diabetes Association in July 2021, made public that 40% of U.S. COVID deaths were diabetics. The December 31, 2021, CDC report on Hospitalizations for those under age 18 during July-August 2021 reported for 12-18 year olds that 88% had at least one underlying medical condition and for 61.4% the underlying medical issue was obesity.

If the Council wants to help the residents of Montgomery County in dealing with COVID-19, instead of enacting more restrictive legislation, Montgomery County resources would be better utilized to address the originating health issues and educating residents on building and bolstering their immune system.

Again, I respectfully request that you vote against the institution of a vaccine passport for Montgomery County. Thank you for your time.

Sincerely,



Lisa Dorney