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Dear Governor Northam,

Throughout the COVID crisis, the Commonwealth of Virginia's 9-1-1 professionals have been there for us, 24/7.

They have selflessly prioritized our health and safety over their own by continuing to work in close quarters, many times lacking access to vital PPE. They have dealt with constantly changing emergency-response protocols and surges in calls about domestic violence, mental-health crises, and serious, at-home illnesses. They have navigated quarantine-induced staffing shortages and, in most communities, no ability to work from home. Like other first responders, they have sacrificed and persevered so that when anyone dials 9-1-1, someone is there to help them.

Sadly, while Virginia's 9-1-1 professionals have served as essential workers throughout the pandemic, Virginia has not recognized these public servants as essential when it comes to the distribution of coronavirus vaccines.

On behalf the Commonwealth of Virginia's 9-1-1 heroes, we respectfully call upon you to prioritize the vaccination of these essential frontline workers and include them in the "public safety" category alongside their law-enforcement, fire-service, and EMS peers.

COVID-19 outbreaks in any of our state's 9-1-1 centers could have deeply concerning consequences, both for those citizens who dial 9-1-1 in moments of crisis and those field responders who rely on 9-1-1 professionals to coordinate emergency-response efforts. Virginia's leaders must take immediate action to vaccinate and protect those who protect us to ensure that no call for help ever goes unanswered.

Please let us know if we can be of any assistance.

Sincerely,

R. Jason Malloy, MS, ENP, RPL
Cell Ph: (540) 481-3342
Virginia Chapter of NENA President