

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

March 19, 2020

Robert Kadlec, M.D., MTM&H, M.S.
Assistant Secretary for Preparedness and Response
U.S. Department of Health and Human Services
200 Independence Ave., SW, Washington, DC 20201

Robin A. Robinson, Ph.D.
Director
Biomedical Advanced Research and Development Authority
U.S. Department of Health and Human Services
200 Independence Ave., SW, Washington, DC 20201

Gary Kleinman
Regional Administrator, Region 1 (New England)
Assistant Secretary for Preparedness and Response
US Department of Health and Human Services
JKF Federal Building, Suite 2100
Boston, MA 02203

Dear Assistant Secretary Kadlec, Director Robinson, and Regional Administrator Kleinman,

We write to you with profound urgency to request that you immediately work to supply Connecticut's health care providers and hospitals with sufficient personal protective equipment (PPE) and other equipment needed to keep staff and patients healthy and safe throughout the 2019-novel coronavirus (COVID-19) response. The Connecticut Department of Public Health (DPH) wrote to request assistance from HHS's Strategic National Stockpile after it identified the first two cases in the state; those needs have only increased now that diagnosed cases have skyrocketed by 3,300 percent in just seven days. We recently learned that you have committed to sending equipment, which we appreciate, although we are concerned that the amount of PPE to be sent falls far short of what will be necessary.

We understand that there is high demand at this moment for PPE; however, some of Connecticut's hospitals are only days away from running out of PPE, which would be nothing short of disastrous. A shortage of PPE in our state risks our medical personnel becoming infected, sidelined, and maybe even hospitalized themselves, at precisely the moment our communities are most heavily depending on them. In addition to the earlier request from DPH, we are also hearing concerns about possible shortages of testing swabs and thermometers in our state. If we are to mitigate and slow this outbreak, it is essential that our hospital staff remains healthy, safe, and supplied with sufficient equipment to care for patients.

Connecticut has taken all the right steps: we have followed the CDC guidance for PPE conservation, surveyed our local supply of PPE, and placed orders for PPE from industry. Unfortunately, manufacturers have informed Connecticut that supplies are low, and that they cannot meet our state's immediate needs in the timeframe needed. With Connecticut being located near some of the hardest-hit areas in the nation,

our state needs prompt access to its full request of PPE from the National Strategic Stockpile to avoid exacerbating this public health emergency. We ask that you provide 250,000 of each of the following: N95 Respirator Face Masks, surgical masks, surgical gowns, non-sterile gloves, and disposable face shields, and quickly address any supplemental requests for additional items such as swabs, thermometers, or other supplies that may become critical to the state's response. We hope that your agency can appropriately respond to the serious circumstances that our state is facing. We look forward to working with you to swiftly to address Connecticut's needs during this critical time.

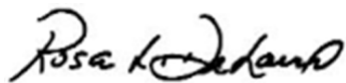
Sincerely,



CHRISTOPHER S. MURPHY
United States Senate



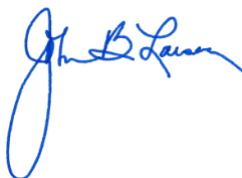
RICHARD BLUMENTHAL
United States Senate



ROSA L. DELAURO
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JOE COURTNEY
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