

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

March 22, 2020

Pete T. Gaynor
Administrator
Federal Emergency Management Agency
500 C Street SW
Washington, D.C. 20472

Robert R. Redfield, M.D.
Director
Centers for Disease Control and Prevention
1600 Clifton Road
Atlanta, GA 30333

The Honorable Alex M. Azar II
Secretary
U.S. Department of Health and Human Services
200 Independence Avenue, SW
Washington, D.C. 20201

Robert Kadlec, M.D.
U.S. Department of Health and Human Services
Office of the Assistant Secretary for Preparedness and Response
200 Independence Avenue, SW
Room 638G
Washington, D.C. 20201

Dear Administrator Gaynor, Dr. Redfield, Secretary Azar, and Assistant Secretary Kadlec,

With more than 300 confirmed cases of the novel coronavirus (COVID-19) in Texas and over 31,000 in the United States, equipping our states, private and public health labs, and health care professionals with all necessary medical supplies is of utmost importance. We write you today urging you to do all you can to provide our state and local health departments and coordinating labs with testing kits and reagents as well as personal protective equipment (PPE).

As you know, on February 4, 2020, the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) provided Emergency Use Authorization (EUA) for the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) to use the RT-polymerase chain reaction (rRT-PCR) test to detect the virus in upper and lower respiratory specimens. It is evident that in order to flatten the curve and lessen the adverse effects of this pandemic, widely available testing and social distancing are imperative.

Yet testing has been severely limited throughout the United States and especially in the state of Texas, forcing clinicians to make difficult decisions about how to ration tests. Not only is this an

unacceptable position to put our frontline health care workers, it also depreciates the reliability of the number of cases reported. In addition, those same medical workers are confronting a critical shortage of personal protective equipment (PPE), including masks, surgical gowns and eye gear to adequately protect them from the virus. This shortage has forced health centers to shut down, limiting the number of providers at a time when we most need them.

As the number of confirmed cases continues to grow, it is of paramount importance that you do everything in your power to ensure that health care professionals in the state of Texas are appropriately protected and that testing kits and reagents are readily available throughout the country, including the Lone Star State which has a population of more than 28 million people. We ask that you please pay close and immediate attention to this letter and let us know what we can do together to lessen the loss of life given this unfortunate world-wide pandemic. Should you need anything more from us, we remain at your disposition.

Sincerely,

Vicente Gonzalez
Member of Congress

Filemon Vela
Member of Congress

Henry Cuellar
Member of Congress