

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

June 29, 2020

The Honorable Greg Abbott
Governor of Texas
1100 Congress Ave.
Room 2S.1
Austin, TX 78701

Dear Governor Abbott:

Over the past week, community leaders and medical providers have alerted us to an impending health care crisis in the Rio Grande Valley. For that reason, we ask that you immediately begin preparations for deployment of National Guard forces to support health providers in the Rio Grande Valley. In counties on the U.S.-Mexico border, demand for intensive care unit (ICU) beds has surpassed capacity. Lacking space for COVID-19 patients in ICUs, emergency rooms across the Lower Rio Grande Valley are forced to continue to care for those who need intensive treatment even as new patients arrive at higher and higher rates.

In South Texas, we are rapidly reaching the point at which local resources will no longer be enough to provide hospital care for the growing COVID-19 caseload, and we urge the establishment of field hospitals and deployment of military personnel to prevent a humanitarian crisis in communities on the U.S.-Mexico border. We urge you to work with the White House to withdraw the current Presidential authorization designating up to 5,500 troops for border protection and shift those resources immediately to provide medical support and expand hospital capacity to help the State of Texas contain the virus and protect the nation. The deployment of military members with training, equipment and technology along with deployable field hospitals, is urgently needed to address shortfalls, including testing, ICU beds, and emergency department capacity.

An emergency situation has now developed with COVID-19 cases exceeding hospital capacity and new cases increasing. We respectfully ask that you immediately send resources to South Texas communities and work with federal authorities to address the growing crisis in our state.

Sincerely,



Filemon Vela
Member of Congress



Vicente Gonzalez
Member of Congress