

United States Senate
WASHINGTON, DC 20510

June 26, 2020

The Honorable Alex Azar
Secretary, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services
Hubert H. Humphrey Building
200 Independence Avenue, S.W.
Washington, D.C. 20201

RE: Replenishment of the Strategic National Stockpile

Dear Secretary Azar:

We write to seek information about ongoing efforts to increase supplies available in the Strategic National Stockpile (SNS) as the country continues to grapple with the deadly COVID-19 pandemic.

Recent reports indicate that the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) is working to replenish the Stockpile's depleted reserves, but the agency has not provided adequate transparency on what the Stockpile currently holds or what targets are for supplies going forward. The administration more broadly has failed to provide requested information about how personal protective equipment and other critical supplies are being prioritized and distributed, including how the administration is balancing current needs on the ground with stocking up on supplies for the future. COVID-19 cases are increasing in most states compared with the prior week, and seven states have recently reported a record high in hospitalizations. As the United States continues to lead the world in COVID-19 cases and deaths and widespread concerns about a second wave continue, your department must provide more information about what supplies exist and what the country will need so that states know what they should expect from the federal government in the months ahead. Without this critical information, it is impossible for state, local, tribal, and territorial partners to plan and respond to growing outbreaks. Delays in action and information sharing could lead to continued shortages of personal protective equipment and medical supplies, and these shortages may, once again, lead to overwhelming the health care system and result in countless deaths that could have been prevented.

To that end, we request your expeditious response to the following questions:

1. What are the current quantities of personal protective equipment in the SNS available for distribution?
2. What is HHS's plan for restocking on supplies that were depleted in the first six months of 2020? Please include target dates and quantities for specific categories of supplies required to safely respond to COVID-19 including, but not limited to, N95 respirators, surgical

masks, face shields, nitrile gloves, and other protective clothing, as well as ventilators and pharmaceuticals.

3. How is HHS balancing the need to supply those currently facing immediate deficiencies of personal protective equipment and medical supplies with the requirement to prepare for a potential future increase in infections?
4. How is HHS utilizing the Defense Production Act to ensure that targets for restocking the SNS are met?
5. Going forward, how will HHS and the Unified Coordination Group (UCG) determine which jurisdictions will receive PPE from the SNS? Specifically, what factors will determine the distribution formula from the SNS?

Thank you for addressing these inquiries. Please contact Jillian Joyce with the responses to these questions no later than July 10, 2020 at jillian_joyce@hsgac.senate.gov.

Sincerely,

/s/ Margaret Wood Hassan
United States Senator

/s/ Gary C. Peters
United States Senator

/s/ Thomas R. Carper
United States Senator

/s/ Kyrsten Sinema
United States Senator

/s/ Jacky Rosen
United States Senator

CC: Rear Admiral John Polowczyk, Supply Chain Stabilization Task Force