

United States Senate

June 25, 2020

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

The Honorable Pete T. Gaynor
Administrator
Federal Emergency Management
Agency
500 C Street SW
Washington, D.C. 20024

Dear Secretary Azar and Administrator Gaynor:

Thank you for your efforts in establishing Community-Based Testing Sites (CBTS) in locations across the State of Texas. These testing sites have played an important role in supporting the state's response to the COVID-19 pandemic as it works to reopen the economy. While I support the CBTS program's transition to a public-private model that will expand testing at retail and pharmacy locations at full federal expense, maintaining the CBTS drive-through sites is critical to Texas' testing capacity. As the federal support for certain CBTS testing sites is set to expire on June 30, I urge you to grant an extension of the program for the sites in Texas.

Texas is currently experiencing a rise in confirmed COVID-19 cases. In the last two weeks, daily new cases, the overall positivity rate, and hospitalizations in Texas have all increased. Some of the state's largest cities—where these CBTS sites are located—are experiencing single-day records of new cases.

Now is not the time to end federal support of a program that is working and successfully increasing testing capacity—especially for underserved communities in the state. I am confident that that the State of Texas and local governments are capable of assuming control of the drive-through sites without interruption, but due to the recent rise of COVID-19 cases in Texas, cities need additional time to prepare for the transition to state and local control of the testing sites. This is a risk that is not worth taking at this time.

The administration has taken important steps to provide Texas with the support and resources it needs to combat this crisis. I respectfully request you temporarily continue the CBTS sites in Texas—and not place that burden on the state while COVID-19 cases are rising—as testing capacity remains a crucial component to reopening the economy and ultimately defeating this disease.

Thank you for your prompt consideration of this request.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "John Cornyn". The signature is written in a cursive style with a horizontal line underneath the name.

JOHN CORNYN

United States Senator

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Ted Cruz". The signature is written in a cursive style with a horizontal line underneath the name.

TED CRUZ

United States Senator