

United States Senate

March 13, 2020

The Honorable Mike Pence
Vice President of the United States
White House
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue NW
Washington, D.C. 20500

Dear Vice President Pence:

As you lead the effort to address the COVID-19 pandemic and protect the American public, I strongly urge the deployment of federally supported or managed field medical stations and mobile testing sites to assist state and local governments in identifying and treating COVID-19 infected patients.

In the recently enacted Coronavirus Preparedness and Response Supplemental Appropriations Act, Congress provided more than \$8.3 billion for COVID-19 response. To the credit of the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) and the Centers for Disease Control (CDC), HHS and CDC have made over \$560 million available to state and local jurisdictions, but more direct, on the ground assistance to increase health system and testing capacity will be needed in the coming days.

As new cases of COVID-19 are reported across the United States, there is concern that the influx of patients will overwhelm the capacity of hospitals and other medical facilities across the country. South Korea has dealt with a shortage of hospital beds, and Italy's hospitals are overloaded. American hospitals have shared concerns about their readiness to deal with a widespread outbreak. We should heed these warnings and prepare to provide additional sites for direct patient care.

Specifically, HHS and CDC, in coordination with all other branches of government, should deploy federally funded or managed mobile COVID-19 testing sites and field medical stations to increase local healthcare system capacity. Such mobile testing sites and field medical stations would be established in areas with increased volumes of COVID-19 patients. These facilities would be federally funded and managed by either federal, state, local, or private personnel. Field medical stations should be equipped with healthcare personnel, additional beds, and adequate medical equipment required to treat COVID-19. Mobile testing sites should provide individuals easy, walk-in or drive-in, access to ready COVID-19 diagnostic testing.

These mobile testing sites and field medical stations will provide overburdened local health systems with the ability to diagnose and treat more patients, thereby alleviating the pressure the COVID-19 pandemic has placed on our state and local healthcare systems.

Our federal healthcare agencies currently have the power to take these actions. We stand ready to support such actions with funding and, as needed, expanded authorization.

Sincerely,



Ted Cruz
United States Senator

cc: The Honorable Alex Azar, Secretary of Health and Human Services
The Honorable Robert R. Redfield, MD, Director of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention
The Honorable Robert Kadlec, MD, Assistant Secretary for Preparedness and Response