



February 26, 2020

The Honorable Nita Lowey
Chairman
House Committee on Appropriations
The Capitol, Room H-307
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Kay Granger
Ranking Member
House Committee on Appropriations
1016 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairman Lowey and Ranking Member Granger:

As national health care organizations who are on the frontlines in providing emergency care to millions of Americans, the Emergency Nurses Association and the American College of Emergency Physicians are writing to urge Congress to consider and pass an emergency supplemental appropriations bill to ensure our health care system has the resources needed to respond to the novel coronavirus (COVID-19) outbreak. Further, it is imperative the request include additional funding for the Hospital Preparedness Program (HPP), the Public Health Emergency Preparedness Cooperative Agreement, research and development of medical treatments, and an enhanced public awareness effort.

Our respective groups support the January 31 decision by the Secretary of the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS), Alex Azar, to declare a public health emergency regarding the coronavirus first identified in Wuhan, Hubei Province, China. We are also aware that HHS has notified Congress of its intention of transferring up to \$136 million from existing programs to address this crisis. The additional funding would be allocated to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), the Assistant Secretary for Preparedness and Response, and HHS's Office of Global Affairs.

Nevertheless, we believe more can and should be done to minimize the risk of coronavirus in the United States. As such, we urge you to approve legislation that would provide additional funds to programs that are critical to enhancing our nation's emergency care and hospital pandemic response capabilities, including the following:

- Hospital Preparedness Program (HPP)
HPP provides resources through grants and cooperative agreements to states, territories and eligible municipalities to improve the capacity of the health care system to plan for and respond to medical surge events, such as may occur due to the coronavirus outbreak. HPP supports regional collaboration on health care preparedness and response by developing and

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sustaining health care coalitions, which are groups of health care and response organizations that collaborate in cases of public health emergencies. 85 percent of our nation's hospitals participate in health care coalitions and receive support through HPP.

- Public Health Emergency Preparedness (PHEP) Cooperative Agreements
Through this program, the CDC helps prepare and respond to a range of public health emergencies, including infectious diseases. In addition, CDC partners with state, local, federal and private partners to build and sustain an integrated approach to public health emergency preparedness.

In addition to these critical programs, our organizations support additional funding for research and development of medical treatments and equipment targeting coronavirus. This should include the development of a vaccine and improved diagnostic tests that can quickly screen anyone who has suspicious symptoms. Used in conjunction with laboratory testing, these rapid tests could uncover previously undiagnosed individuals or unknown hotspots.

Finally, these efforts should be supplemented by an enhanced public awareness campaign designed to raise awareness of how to prevent the disease and curtail its spread.

With a combined membership of more than 84,000 health care professionals who provide care to 145 million Americans each year in hospital emergency departments, our two organizations are on the forefront of efforts to diagnose and treat patients who potentially have been infected by the coronavirus. We believe now is the time to ensure that our health care system is prepared to respond effectively to the coronavirus outbreak. Therefore, we strongly support immediate action to enhance our response capabilities to this growing public health crisis.

Sincerely,



William P. Jaquis, MD, MSHQS, FACEP
President
American College of Emergency Physicians



Mike Hastings, MSN, RN, CEN
2020 President
Emergency Nurses Association