

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

Alex M. Azar II, Secretary
U.S. Department of Health & Human Services
200 Independence Avenue, S.W.
Washington, D.C. 20201

July 17, 2020

Dear Secretary Azar:

The coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic continues to spread at an alarming rate across the country and is surging in several states. According to the latest data from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), there have been nearly 3.5 million cases of COVID-19 diagnosed in the United States, and nearly 137,000 deaths. This is a tragedy. In order for states and the federal government to have the full scope of authorities to respond to the pandemic, we urge you to extend the current public health emergency due to the COVID-19 pandemic, which is currently set to expire on July 25, 2020.

Due in large part to services and funding accessed under the previous two emergency declarations, the number of cases in New Jersey are decreasing. In order to ensure this downward trajectory remains, our communities continue to invest significant resources into public health infrastructure, testing capacity, and containment and mitigation efforts. This is putting tremendous strain on resources. Further, businesses remain closed, personal protective equipment (PPE) remains in short supply, and in some cases testing results continue to be delayed up to a week.

While outlooks have improved in New Jersey, significant increases in COVID-19 cases in several states, including Florida, Texas, Arizona, and Louisiana show that the virus is still spreading at an alarming rate. Increased, coordinated efforts around testing and acquiring PPE are still needed to contain this deadly outbreak. Thus, in addition to extending the public health emergency declaration we urge you to use the full force of the federal government behind a centralized effort to increase testing and manufacturing of PPE.

With over 60,000 new cases each day and testing still not meeting the necessary standards to open the economy or help contain the spread, we need to continue putting all available resources into our efforts to control the outbreak. By extending the current public health emergency we can help save lives, right our struggling economy, and bolster our recovery.

Sincerely,



Donald Norcross
Member of Congress



Frank Pallone, Jr.
Member of Congress



Robert Menendez
U.S. Senator



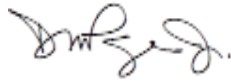
Cory A. Booker
U.S. Senator



Christopher H. Smith
Member of Congress



Bill Pascrell, Jr.
Member of Congress



Donald M. Payne, Jr.
Member of Congress



Albio Sires
Member of Congress



Bonnie Watson Coleman
Member of Congress



Josh Gottheimer
Member of Congress



Andy Kim
Member of Congress



Mikie Sherrill
Member of congress



Tom Malinowski
Member of Congress



Jeff Van Drew
Member of Congress