

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20510

March 22, 2020

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

Dear Secretary Azar:

We write to ask the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) to expedite delivery of personal protective equipment (PPE) from the Strategic National Stockpile (SNS) to Minnesota as our state confronts the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic.

HHS has rightly mobilized the SNS in response to the current unprecedented need for medical supplies—including ventilators, masks, shoe covers, gowns, and gloves—for our hospitals. But while our state has made several requests for items from the SNS, state officials and health care professionals are still waiting for the majority of these critical supplies. In order to protect both the patients and the selfless frontline health care workers who treat them, Minnesota needs the full amount of supplies that it has requested to combat the COVID-19 pandemic. Importantly, these PPE products and supplies are essential in taking patient samples and processing tests for the virus—which has also been troublingly slowed down in our state due to supply chain shortages.

We have heard from health care professionals in Minnesota that there is an urgent need for information regarding what specific types of medical supplies and equipment will be allocated to the state, how much will be sent, and when it will be distributed. As the number of coronavirus patients and coronavirus-related hospitalizations grows by the day and seriously strains our health care system's ability to keep workers safe and respond efficiently to patient needs, we call on you to take immediate action to ensure the delivery of these supplies to Minnesota. We also ask that you provide responses to the following questions:

1. How is HHS determining which states receive certain medical supplies?
2. When will Minnesota receive the full order of medical supplies that state officials have requested?
3. How is the Administration planning to address the serious shortages in medical supplies and equipment being reported nationwide?

Thank you for your response to this urgent inquiry.

Sincerely,



Amy Klobuchar
United States Senator



Tina Smith
United States Senator



Angie Craig
Member of Congress



Dean Phillips
Member of Congress



Betty McCollum
Member of Congress



Ilhan Omar
Member of Congress



Collin C. Peterson
Member of Congress