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United States Senate  
WASHINGTON, DC 20510

November 13, 2020

Dr. Robert Redfield  
Director  
Centers for Disease Control and Prevention  
1600 Clifton Road  
Atlanta, GA 30329

Dear Director Redfield:

I write to express my concern regarding reports of influenza (flu) vaccine shortages in certain regions of the country and to request information regarding the steps the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) is taking to prepare for the upcoming flu season and ensure that all communities and populations have access to the flu vaccine this year.

Public health experts have warned for months that this year's flu season may be unusually severe if large numbers of people are unable to safely access a flu vaccine.<sup>1</sup> It is especially important that we minimize transmission of the flu this year because a severe flu season would have a devastating impact on the lives of Americans and public health systems that are already coping with surging coronavirus cases.

For this reason, we must ensure that this year's flu vaccine is safely and readily available to all Americans. It was previously announced that the federal government purchased an additional 9.3 million doses of flu vaccine to prepare for this year's flu season and manufacturers expect to provide as many as 198 million doses of the influenza vaccine for the U.S. market.<sup>2</sup> Yet recent reports indicate that some regions of the country have experienced shortages of flu vaccine doses due to regional distribution challenges caused by an increase in demand.<sup>3</sup> This includes some cities and towns in Minnesota, where pharmacists have run out of the higher-dose flu vaccine recommended for people over age 65, with some of these shortages lasting for a few weeks.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Hoffman, J. (2020, October 12). Fearing a 'Twindemic,' Health Experts Push Urgently for Flu Shots. *New York Times*. <https://www.nytimes.com/2020/08/16/health/coronavirus-flu-vaccine-twindemic.html>.

<sup>2</sup> Hoffman, J. (2020, October 12). Fearing a 'Twindemic,' Health Experts Push Urgently for Flu Shots. *New York Times*. <https://www.nytimes.com/2020/08/16/health/coronavirus-flu-vaccine-twindemic.html>; Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (2020, October 15). *Seasonal Influenza Vaccine Supply for the U.S. 2020-2021 Influenza Season*. <https://www.cdc.gov/flu/prevent/vaxsupply.htm>.

<sup>3</sup> Center for Infectious Disease Research and Policy (2020, October 27). *Flu Vaccine Demand Creates Minor Regional U.S. Shortages*. University of Minnesota. <https://www.cidrap.umn.edu/news-perspective/2020/10/flu-vaccine-demand-creates-minor-regional-us-shortages>.

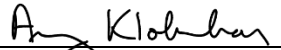
<sup>4</sup> WCCO-TV (2020, September 24). 'Unprecedented Demand' for Flu Shots Causing Shortages. CBS Minnesota. <https://minnesota.cbslocal.com/2020/09/24/unprecedented-demand-for-flu-shots-causes-shortage/>.

These reported shortages and their impact on vulnerable groups – especially seniors – are extremely concerning. Accordingly, I request your response to the following questions to better understand the CDC’s efforts to address these shortages and ensure that all communities across the country have access to the flu vaccine:

1. How is the CDC encouraging flu vaccine manufacturers and distributors to use distribution strategies that can meet this year’s increased demand for the flu vaccine?
2. How is the CDC working with communities across the country to ensure that the flu vaccine is readily accessible and can be administered safely despite the unique challenges of this year’s flu season?
3. What steps is the CDC taking to communicate to the public, including state and local leaders, about the importance of getting a flu vaccine during the coronavirus pandemic?

Thank you for your time and attention to this important matter. I look forward to working with you to ensure that communities have access to the supply of flu vaccines they need to keep Americans healthy.

Sincerely,



Amy Klobuchar

United States Senator