



EXECUTIVE OFFICE OF THE PRESIDENT
OFFICE OF MANAGEMENT AND BUDGET
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20503

February 24, 2020

The Honorable Michael R. Pence
President of the Senate
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Mr. President:

In late December 2019, China identified a novel coronavirus which was causing human-to-human transmission and has subsequently been named COVID-19. On January 30, 2020, the World Health Organization declared a public health emergency of international concern due to widespread transmission of the virus. As of February 23, 2020, there are 78,811 confirmed cases of COVID-19 in approximately 30 countries worldwide; the total number of COVID-19 related deaths is now over 2,500 people, the majority of which are in China. In the United States, there have been 14 confirmed cases of COVID-19 presenting in seven states (not including 39 persons repatriated to the United States who have tested positive).

The President's priority is protecting the homeland, and the Administration is working aggressively to minimize the risk of the virus spreading in the United States. The President has created a Coronavirus Task Force to direct the U.S. response. This Task Force is led by the Secretary of Health and Human Services (HHS) and is composed of subject matter experts from across Government, including some of the Nation's foremost experts on infectious diseases. On January 31, 2020, the Secretary of HHS declared a public health emergency. HHS has tapped into the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's (CDC) Infectious Diseases Rapid Response Reserve Fund to help combat the virus. In addition, fiscal year (FY) 2020 funds are being re-prioritized across HHS as necessary to address the virus.

The Government has taken unprecedented steps to minimize the risk of travelers spreading COVID-19 to the United States. The President suspended entry into the United States of certain foreign nationals who have recently traveled to China and who pose a risk of transmitting the virus and directed inbound flights from China to 11 airports where enhanced screening now takes place.

The Government has conducted numerous charter flights to evacuate American citizens from Wuhan, in the Hubei Province, China and the cruise ship *Diamond Princess* back to the United States. All passengers were screened for symptoms before the flights, and medical professionals continue to monitor the health of all returning passengers.

At the direction of the President and under the auspices of the Task Force, several Federal agencies are contributing significant resources and personnel to support the domestic and international response. To this point, no agency has been inhibited in response efforts due to resources or authorities. However, much is still unknown about this virus and the disease it causes. The Administration believes additional Federal resources are necessary to take steps to prepare for a potential worsening of the situation in the United States, and requests an

appropriation of \$1.25 billion of emergency funding in the Public Health and Social Services Emergency Fund at HHS to continue supporting critical response and preparedness activities. In addition, the Administration is requesting that the Congress permit the \$535 million in emergency supplemental funding appropriated in the Agriculture, Rural Development, Food and Drug Administration, and Related Agencies Appropriations Act, 2020, to the Public Health and Social Services Emergency Fund at HHS for the prevention and treatment of Ebola to be used for COVID-19 response. Tremendous progress has been made on Ebola and the current national response priority should be COVID-19. These two proposals would make \$1.8 billion in new resources available for the current response.

This funding would support all aspects of the U.S. response, including: public health preparedness and response efforts; public health surveillance, epidemiology, laboratory testing, and quarantining costs; advanced research and development of new vaccines, therapeutics, and diagnostics; advanced manufacturing enhancements; and the Strategic National Stockpile. Funds would also be made available, as necessary, to affected States that are making contributions to the current national response.

Because this funding arises from an unforeseen, unanticipated event and is necessary for the protection of human life, these supplemental resources should be designated as emergency funding. In addition to these emergency supplemental appropriations, the Administration is seeking enhanced authorities to use existing resources most effectively and to create additional flexibility for directing resources toward the response. These flexibilities include the ability for HHS to transfer funds to CDC, the National Institutes of Health, the Food and Drug Administration, the Assistant Secretary for Preparedness and Response, and other components as necessary to carry out further response activities. This also includes enhanced transfer authority for the Secretary for the COVID-19 response, similar to the authority already provided for the HHS Refugee and Entrant Assistance account. In addition, the Administration seeks an increase of the authorized funding level, to \$10 million, for the repatriation program within the Administration for Children and Families for potential or future response activities.

With the appropriation of new emergency funding, as well as the repurposing of FY 2020 Ebola resources, reprioritization of other FY 2020 funding across HHS, and contributions from other Government agencies, across the Government we expect to allocate at least \$2.5 billion in total resources for COVID-19 response efforts.

Thank you for your consideration of these funding needs. I urge the Congress to take swift action to provide the additional funding requested to support the United States response to COVID-19. I stand ready to work with you to achieve this goal.

Sincerely,



Russell T. Vought
Acting Director

Identical Letter Sent to:

The Honorable Nancy Pelosi
The Honorable Mitch McConnell
The Honorable Charles E. Schumer
The Honorable Kevin McCarthy
The Honorable Richard C. Shelby
The Honorable Nita Lowey
The Honorable Patrick J. Leahy
The Honorable Kay Granger