

Alex Azar  
United States Secretary of Health and  
Human Services  
200 Independence Avenue, S.W.  
Washington, D.C. 20201

**March 23, 2020**

Secretary Alex Azar,

We are now in the second phase of the COVID-19 outbreak in the United States: swathes of our population across all 50 states are now practicing self-quarantine or social distancing, COVID-19 cases have surged to over 35,000, and our hospitals and healthcare workers are facing dire shortages of testing kits, medical supplies, and personal protective equipment. **To effectively control the rate of infection, protect our healthcare workers, and strengthen our ability to treat those infected, we demand that the U.S. government increase the production and availability of testing kits nationwide and provide more medical resources and personal protective equipment (PPE) for our hospitals and healthcare workforce.**

The rate of cases has been soaring while we struggle to play catch-up. The shortage of tests has hampered our efforts in containing the spread of infection and has prevented more stringent quarantine implementation. Both are crucial strategies recommended by WHO and successfully employed by nations to halt the spread of this infection. The lack of required funding to the CDC has created a failure in containing this pandemic by not immediately finding alternative pathways to provide COVID-19 testing, and now the CDC is also compromising the safety of our healthcare workers by not complying with the international standards of precautions and infection control required for COVID-19.

Although delayed, the Defense Protection Act (DPA) that President Trump signed carries the potential to alleviate the pressures on hospitals and professionals dealing with COVID-19 patients. We urge President Trump to **immediately invoke the DPA to its full potential** to direct American companies to mass manufacture medical supplies, including ventilators, respirators, and PPE, that are in short supply during this pandemic instead of waiting for a “worst case scenario”. Under the DPA, you have the authority to determine how best to allocate essential health and medical supplies and resources. We ask you to fully commit yourself to ensuring that manufacturers produce enough medical equipment for our country, our healthcare workers and other frontline workers, and coordinate your efforts with state governors to guarantee proper distribution. **As medical/public health professionals, policy advocates, and concerned citizens, we support the immediate implementation of the DPA and the expansion of the Act to include provisions for providing protective equipment for home**

**health care staff and the vulnerable population including the elderly who are more susceptible to complications related to COVID-19.**

The United States as a nation is falling behind in the fight against this pandemic as we have failed to utilize the strategies of testing, isolating, and tracking in due time. Singapore, South Korea, and Taiwan are few of the countries that are leading the world in defeating COVID-19, and the US should review and learn from their methods. In fact, South Korea had its first case around the same time as the U.S., but was able to swiftly tackle the rate of infection through mass levels of testing and transparency between the government and its people. We urge the administration to follow the example of those countries to increase screening and to take these first steps towards better management of the current state of impending disaster that we are facing.

Sincerely,

**Policy Committee Of National Muslim Covid-19 Taskforce:**

- American Muslim Health Professionals (AMHP)
- Muslim Public Affairs Council (MPAC)
- Islamic Medical Association of North American (IMANA)
- Council on American-Islamic Relations (CAIR)
- Engage Action
- Muslim Caucus
- Green Muslims

- Women Neurologists Group
- Network Lobby for Catholic Justice

