



THE CITY OF NEW YORK
OFFICE OF THE MAYOR
NEW YORK, NY 10007

March 19, 2020

The Honorable Alex Azar
Secretary
United States Department of Health and Human Services
200 Independence Avenue, S.W.
Washington, DC 20201

Dear Secretary Azar:

Thank you for releasing the Strategic National Stockpile (SNS), in response to the 2019 Novel Coronavirus (COVID-19). As you are aware, there have been severe shortages of personal protective equipment (PPE) due to the depletion of the supply chain and the exceedingly high demand for more resources. The federal government's support to localities like New York City is essential in the fight to limit and end the spread of the virus.

As the nation's largest and densest city, with a population of 8.6 million, New York City is responsible for one of the largest public health infrastructures in the world. Every day, our health agencies are working hard to protect and respond to emerging threats. The City of New York uniquely possesses a highly complex healthcare network and our local health departments are the backbone of our response system.

The City is in great need of supplies to promote safety and to protect the public's health. Recycling 2007 PPE supplies from supplemental funding for pandemic influenza preparedness does not suffice in the current crisis. Instead, the City of New York is requesting that the United States Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) provide the City with additional assistance so that we are able to better combat COVID-19.

The City is specifically updating its request for HHS to implement the following strategies to help mitigate this pandemic:

- **Limit Supply Chain to Healthcare Networks:**

We ask that the Administration begin limiting healthcare supply chains and direct them towards localities most in need, including our City's Health + Hospitals system and hospitals associated with the Greater New York Hospital Association. By prioritizing the distribution of healthcare supplies amongst healthcare workers and localities, we will ensure that our most vulnerable populations will have the much-needed resources for combating the virus. There should be limitations on the distribution of critical resources on the free market.

- **Promoting Manufactures to Domestically Produce Healthcare Supplies:**

Manufacturers should be directed to locally produce healthcare resources. Doing so will increase the supply of products, help boost our local economies, and decrease the wait time for supplies. We are currently too dependent on overseas markets and imported supplies. Therefore we ask the Administration to direct all domestic manufacturers that are able to produce healthcare supplies to switch all production to the items in greatest shortage. This must happen in order to adequately replenish depleted and low stock resources of critical medical equipment.

- **Distribute Additional Medical Equipment:**

The City of New York currently has more positive cases of COVID-19 than any other locality. For this reason, we are in serious need of: 3 million N95 masks; 50 million surgical/face masks; 15,000 ventilators; and 45 million face shields, 45 million surgical gowns, 45 million coveralls, and 45 million gloves. We urge the Administration to provide more supplies to help us address COVID-19's growing threat.

- **Require OSHA to relax requirements on the use of expired N95s and gowns to align with CDC recommendations:**

The N95s and gowns that New York City received from the SNS are expired. As a result, they are unusable until OSHA adjusts its rules and regulations on the usage of expired N95s in the health care setting. We urge the Administration to make these changes immediately so that we can begin utilization.

On behalf of the City of New York, our experts at New York City Department of Health and Mental Hygiene, NYC Health + Hospitals, and all NYC agencies, we truly appreciate your partnership. We look forward to continuing to work with you to bring an end to this global crisis.

Sincerely,



Bill de Blasio
Mayor

CC: Senator Charles E. Schumer