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By Appointment



**Congress of the United States**  
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April 22, 2020

The Honorable Mike Pence  
Vice President of the United States  
The White House  
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW  
Washington, D.C. 20500

The Honorable Deborah Birx  
Coronavirus Response Coordinator  
U.S. Department of State  
2201 C Street, NW  
Washington, D.C. 20520

Dear Vice President Pence and Dr. Birx:

Thank you for your dedication and leadership in addressing the current coronavirus pandemic devastating our nation. I am highly encouraged by the work the White House Coronavirus Task Force has done in ensuring funding was quickly made available for the diagnosis, treatment, and prevention of COVID-19, particularly for those communities lacking resources and with individuals who are most vulnerable to the virus.

Collaboration between government, hospitals, and private industry to apply cutting edge technology with US-based manufacturing capabilities is essential to addressing this crisis quickly and effectively—and sustaining our ability to respond, if necessary, in the future. Hackensack Meridian Health's Center for Discovery and Innovation (CDI), located in Neptune, New Jersey in my district, has developed a test for COVID-19 that has been licensed to T2 Biosystems based in Lexington, Massachusetts. Wider deployment of the COVID-19 test, already in use in the Hackensack Meridian Health network—New Jersey's largest hospital system—will meet a crucial need amid the continuing spread of the novel coronavirus.

As a response to the COVID-19 diagnostic crisis, T2 Biosystems is developing a point-of-care, real-time coronavirus diagnostic test to add to their FDA-approved fully automated diagnostic system. Additionally, it is my understanding that the company is prepared to deploy hundreds of instruments and over 100,000 more tests—a capability that is vitally important in dealing with the expected increase in COVID-19 cases across the country, especially in more rural areas with limited access to laboratories and acute care medical facilities.

I continue to be encouraged by your Task Force and BARDA as you respond to this pandemic threat, and I respectfully request your full and fair consideration for making funding available to leverage the Hackensack Meridian Health and T2 Biosystems technologies in our nationwide COVID-19 response.

Thank you again for your leadership and advancement of promising diagnostic technologies that can assist medical professionals in identifying COVID-19 patients, therefore accelerating treatment and lifesaving care.

Sincerely,



CHRISTOPHER H. SMITH  
Member of Congress

CC:

Mr. Alex M. Azar, Secretary of Health and Human Services

Dr. Robert R. Redfield Jr., MD, Director of the Centers for Disease Control

Dr. Anthony S. Fauci, MD, NIAID Director

Mr. Kenneth T. Cuccinelli II, Acting Deputy Secretary of Homeland Security

Dr. Peter Navarro, Director of the Office of Trade and Manufacturing Policy

Dr. Robert P. Kadlec, MD, Assistant Secretary for Preparedness and Response

Dr. Rick A. Bright, Ph.D., Director of the Biomedical Advances Research and Development Authority (BARDA)