

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

April 04, 2020

The Honorable Alex M. Azar II
Secretary
Department of Health and Human Services
200 Independence Ave SW
Washington, DC 20201

The Honorable Peter Gaynor
Administrator
Federal Emergency Management Administration
500 C St SW
Washington, DC 20472

Dear Secretary Azar and Administrator Gaynor:

We reach out to you today to urge you to continue to provide desperately needed supplies and personnel, at or above the current capacity, to the two federally sponsored COVID-19 testing sites in New Jersey until a clear and proven decline in positive cases and related hospital admissions has been observed.

As you know, these drive-through test sites were stood up at Bergen Community College in Paramus and the PNC Bank Arts Center in Holmdel on March 20 and March 23, respectively, and to date have tested more than 6,500 people. New Jersey's Department of Health has reported that the pandemic has not yet peaked and is expected to worsen in the coming weeks, after the anticipated transition of these sites on April 10. Our state already has the unfortunate ranking of the second largest outbreak by total number of cases—second only to our closest neighbors to the north, New York. Sadly, 646 New Jerseyans have lost their lives to this insidious virus and that number rises every hour.

We have been advised by the Governor and the New Jersey Department of Health that FEMA and the U.S. Public Health Service intends to transition the oversight of these two testing stations on or about April 10, 2020. This is highly disconcerting, as New Jersey health officials are expecting the peak in positive cases and hospitalizations to come *after* the April 10th deadline.

Now is not the time for the federal government to step back from helping to identify those who may increase the transmission of COVID-19 in our communities. Therefore, we strongly urge you to continue or increase your current commitment to supporting the New Jersey's COVID-19 testing center until the peak of infections has begun its decline.

Sincerely,

CHRISTOPHER H. SMITH
Member of Congress

JOSH GOTTHEIMER
Member of Congress

CORY BOOKER
United States Senator

ROBERT MENENDEZ
United States Senator

MIKIE SHERRILL
Member of Congress

JEFFERSON VAN DREW
Member of Congress

DONALD M. PAYNE JR.
Member of Congress

ANDY KIM
Member of Congress

BILL PASCRELL, JR.
Member of Congress

BONNIE WATSON COLEMAN
Member of Congress

DONALD NORCROSS
Member of Congress

ALBIO SIRES
Member of Congress

FRANK PALLONE, JR.
Member of Congress