

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20510

June 12, 2020

The Honorable Alex M. Azar II
Secretary
U.S. Department of Health & Human
Services
200 Independence Avenue, S.W.
Washington, D.C. 20201

The Honorable Seema Verma
Administrator
Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services
7500 Security Boulevard
Baltimore, MD 21244

Dear Secretary Azar and Administrator Verma,

We write regarding the state of Oregon's urgent need for critical COVID-19 testing supplies at long-term care facilities as the state prepares to reopen consistent with federal recommendations.

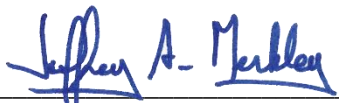
On May 18, the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) issued a document titled *Nursing Home Reopening Recommendations for State and Local Officials*. This document provides recommendations for America's nursing homes to mitigate the spread of the coronavirus within facilities, prevent a resurgence of cases among residents, and safely reinstate visitations and additional services. Among other provisions, the document recommends baseline testing and retesting of nursing facilities' residents and health care personnel as key strategies to ensure the safe reopening of these facilities.

On June 9, Oregon's Governor Kate Brown announced a plan to test all 60,000 residents and health care personnel in all of the state's long-term care facilities, including nursing homes. However, the state cannot implement their plan with the current limited supply of testing transport media and swabs. As described in her letter to you also on June 9, Oregon has received only a fraction of the swabs and units of transport media promised to the state by the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA). Further delay of the distribution of these supplies will leave Oregon's vulnerable nursing home community at risk of additional outbreaks.

Oregon continues to see increases in COVID-19 cases with the state's current testing capacity. Recent outbreaks at nursing homes have highlighted the need to scale up testing for this population. Without additional federal resources, the state will struggle to contain outbreaks in long-term care facilities, where residents are particularly vulnerable to COVID-19. Increased infections in these settings could also lead to further spread of COVID-19 in the state's general public.

We request that Oregon's allocation for testing media and swabs be significantly increased as requested by the Governor and that 100% of the state's allocation be provided. These resources are critical in enacting the recommendations outlined in the CMS guidance document on reopening nursing homes and ensuring resident and worker safety at all of Oregon's long-term care facilities.

Sincerely,



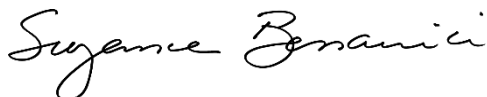
Jeffrey A. Merkley
United States Senator



Ron Wyden
United States Senator



Earl Blumenauer
Member of Congress



Suzanne Bonamici
Member of Congress



Peter DeFazio
Member of Congress



Kurt Schrader
Member of Congress

CC: Admiral Brett Giroir, U.S. Department of Health & Human Services
Dr. Tammy Beckham, U.S. Department of Health & Human Services
Mr. Mike O' Hare, Federal Emergency Management Agency Region 10