

April 16, 2020

White House Coronavirus Task Force  
Vice President Mike Pence, Chairman  
15 Independence Avenue, SW  
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Vice President Pence,

Thank you for the work you have been doing to protect the health and well-being of Montanans and Americans across the country during the COVID-19 pandemic. I applaud your efforts to accelerate testing for COVID-19 and would encourage the White House Coronavirus Task Force to continue prioritizing the deployment of widespread diagnostic tests as well as advancing the approval of antibody tests, which can help play a critical role in the fight against COVID-19.

As you know, antibody tests detect the body's immune response to a specific infection, like COVID-19. These kinds of tests can help medical experts determine how the virus has impacted society by identifying individuals who were infected with COVID-19 and recovered. Importantly, when used with other clinical data, antibody tests can help determine that an individual is likely to be protected from COVID-19 and able to return to work and school.

I would encourage the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) to continue utilizing all available resources and expertise to be able to quickly move forward with approving additional antibody tests to ensure they are reliable and widely available. Just as importantly, I would also request that the White House Coronavirus Task Force develop a production and distribution strategy so that states like Montana will be able to quickly access and deploy tests immediately once they are available.

As discussions on reopening the U.S. economy continue, antibody tests could help provide an indicator for determining when it is safe and appropriate for Montanans and Americans across the country to return to work, school, and their daily lives. As promising clinical trials continue and we wait for antivirals and vaccines to be developed and deployed, widespread testing to diagnose active coronavirus infections and determine who has been exposed to the virus and developed antibodies against it will help allow us to turn the tide of this disease.

Thank you again for your dedication and work on behalf of the American people during this public health crisis. I look forward to continuing our work together to ensure that Montana and states across the nation are equipped to combat this pandemic and prepared for the future as discussions regarding restarting the economy continue.

Sincerely,



STEVE DAINES  
United States Senator