

October 8, 2020

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

The Honorable Robert Kadlec
Assistant Secretary for Preparedness and Response
Department of Health and Human Services
200 Independence Avenue S.W.
Washington, D.C. 20201

Dear Secretary Azar and Assistant Secretary Kadlec:

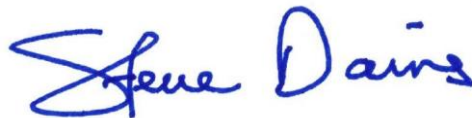
I write to you today to encourage the expeditious review of Montana's requests for supplies and medicines from the Strategic National Stockpile (SNS) to ensure our health care system, first responders, and care facilities are equipped to handle the COVID-19 crisis. As our state is currently experiencing a regional surge in COVID-19 cases, I would urge you to consider Montana's unique health care needs to ensure we have the personal protective equipment (PPE), ventilators, and other medical equipment necessary to care for patients and combat the coronavirus.

Montana is now top five in new cases per capita, with total cases doubling over the past month. This surge in cases is testing the limits of our state's health care system as hospitals and other health care facilities are reaching capacity constraints. The SNS is an important federal resource that can equip states with life-saving medical supplies and pharmaceuticals for use during public health emergencies when state and local supplies have run out. Those who are on the frontlines of the coronavirus public health emergency require PPE, such as masks, gowns, and gloves, to keep themselves safe and provide necessary care. As such, state requests to the federal government for PPE and other medical supplies from the SNS should be reviewed with immediacy to protect health care workers, first responders, and public health.

As this public health crisis continues, I would encourage you to consider the unique health care needs of Montana and continue working with me to ensure our health care providers have the supplies and equipment they need to provide care, protect their health, and treat patients.

Thank you for your consideration of this request and for your commitment to addressing this public health crisis. I look forward to your response and continuing to work with you to combat COVID-19.

Sincerely,



STEVE DAINES
United States Senator