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GetUsPPE



**DOCTORS
FOR AMERICA**



 | **Frontline PPE NOW**



May 1st, 2020
The President
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW Washington, DC 20500

Health Professionals Call for Federal Coordination on Medical Supplies and Comprehensive Testing

Dear President Trump,
Cc: Adm. Brett Giroir

Centralized, federal leadership is necessary for the efficient purchase and distribution of medical equipment, including personal protective equipment, ventilators, and testing resources.¹ State governments depend on the federal government for aid and assistance during times of national emergency.² Just as importantly, without central coordination, states are forced to compete against each other for critical supplies, which leads to skyrocketing prices and increased risk for members of the public and health care workers.³

Therefore, we the undersigned strongly recommend the following:

1. The federal government should immediately establish a “medical equipment czar” and associated task force with the mission of overseeing the national supply and distribution of medical equipment. The task force should partner with the Defense Logistics Agency on logistics and national distribution, and be given the resources and authority to:
 - Inventory and monitor the supply of medical equipment.
 - Forecast the spread of the novel coronavirus to anticipate the need for medical supplies in areas that are experiencing high rates of infection.
 - Ensure adequate production and procurement of medical supplies by working with the Trump administration to fully utilize the Defense Production Act.
 - Oversee the purchase and end-to-end distribution of medical equipment directly to impacted areas.

2. The described task force undertakes its mission with full transparency by:
 - Releasing detailed plans for task force organization and resource needs and allocation.
 - Providing frequent updates throughout the course of the COVID-19 crisis detailing its efforts.
 - Providing state and local governments with any information they need to coordinate response efforts.

3. Ensure that Admiral Giroir, the testing chief:
 - Coordinates the effort to expand testing capacity and expedited test processing.⁴
 - Sets up infrastructure for widespread use of the COVID-19 serological test.
 - Works with the Administration to fully utilize the Defense Production Act to get the tests and testing supplies, while setting clear standards for quality and expanding testing options through newly authorized labs, drive-through and home testing.
 - Sets up a national, coordinated network that can identify and trace future pockets of infection before they multiply into larger outbreaks.

Thank you for considering our urgent request as health professionals work to save lives during this unprecedented public health challenge.

Sincerely,

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Sources

- [1] The World Health Organization suggests, with regard to PPE, that “The management of PPE should be coordinated through essential national and international supply chain management mechanisms”:
https://apps.who.int/iris/bitstream/handle/10665/331215/WHO-2019-nCov-IPCPPE_use-2020.1-eng.pdf
- [2] The role of federal government during emergencies is described in: Federal Emergency Management Agency, *National Response Framework, Fourth Edition*, 29 October 2019, available at <https://www.fema.gov/media-library/assets/documents/117791>; An overview and history of federal assistance to states is available in: Federal Emergency Management Agency, *A Citizen's Guide to Disaster Assistance*, September 2003, available at <https://training.fema.gov/emiweb/downloads/is7complete.pdf>.
- [3] On March 22, New York Governor Andrew Cuomo wrote on Twitter that “states are competing against other states for supplies.” <https://twitter.com/nygovcuomo/status/1241744786366889984?s=21> And on March 20, Massachusetts Governor Charlie Baker announced that Massachusetts had been outbid by the federal government for medical supplies, creating an obstacle to adequately supplying the state: <https://www.wbur.org/news/2020/03/20/charlie-baker-donald-trump-coronavirus-medical-supplies>. On April 2nd, Propublica published an investigation citing that New York has had to pay between four and 15 times the usual rate for medical supplies: <https://www.propublica.org/article/in-desperation-new-york-state-pays-up-to-15-times-the-normal-price-for-medical-equipment>.
- [4] Public health experts lay out what’s needed with testing in OpEd in the Wall Street Journal, *The Road Back to Normal, More, Better Testing* by Scott Gottlieb and Lauren Silvi, <https://www.wsj.com/articles/the-road-back-to-normal-more-better-testing-11585503340>