

March 20, 2020

The Honorable Mitch McConnell
U.S. Capitol
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Chuck Schumer
U.S. Capitol
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Majority Leader McConnell and Minority Leader Schumer:

On behalf of public health professionals across the nation responding to the COVID-19 emergency, thank you for quickly providing the first set of emergency supplemental funding for local and state public health response efforts. Public health departments across the country are currently working to identify COVID-19 cases and protect the public from the spread of the disease.

As you know, Congress has already appropriated funds for the development and distribution of medical countermeasures (MCM) for COVID-19. The undersigned organizations oppose the inclusion of Section 4101 of Title X in the Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security Act, which would remove the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) from collaboration with the Office of the Assistant Secretary for Preparedness and Response (ASPR) on the management of the Strategic National Stockpile.

The distribution of MCM and other medical supplies needed in an emergency is a process that requires coordination from the local, state and federal levels of government. According to the ASPR website, "Within the Public Health Emergency Medical Countermeasures Enterprise (PHEMCE), both CDC and ASPR/Biomedical Advanced Research and Development Authority (BARDA) have lead roles in procuring medical countermeasures for stockpiling." In addition, the website says "ASPR coordinates with CDC on the development of federal response plans, policy, guidance, and communication, and development of clinical utilization and allocation strategies as appropriate for medical countermeasures and assets. ASPR and CDC also coordinate interactions with state, local, tribal, territorial, and private entities to provide timely and effective deployment, distribution, dispensing, and administration of medical countermeasures in an emergency."

Currently, CDC expertise on public health emergency preparedness from the Center for Preparedness and Response plays an integral role to the operations of the SNS. Without CDC involvement, this expertise will be lost. CDC experts provide guidance and technical assistance to help health departments develop, test, operationalize, and improve preparedness and medical countermeasure plans and evaluation to standardize approaches and tools to measure the readiness of health departments to get life-saving medicines and supplies to the public. In addition, the CDC's Inventory Management and Tracking System (IMATS) is currently used for tracking and monitoring of assets from point of origin to point of dispensing. During an

emergency, valuable time will be lost in the effort to stop COVID-19 if there is a requirement to create a new inventory management system.

We appreciate this opportunity to comment on the Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security Act and look forward to continuing to work with you to protect the public during this unprecedented emergency. Please contact Adriane Casalotti, MPH, MSW; NACCHO Chief of Government and Public Affairs with any questions at acasalotti@naccho.org.

Sincerely,

American Public Health Association
National Association of County and City Health Officials
Trust for America's Health