

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

March 11, 2020

Michael R. Pence
Vice President
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Ave, NW
Washington, DC 20500

Dear Vice President Pence:

Yesterday, Governor Roy Cooper announced a state of emergency in North Carolina to step up prevention in response to the spread of the coronavirus (COVID-19) in our state. We are grateful for the work this administration has put into combatting COVID-19, and as federal representatives of North Carolina, we want to ensure our state has the capacity to meet current and future demands for diagnostic testing.

We appreciate the administration's partnership on the Coronavirus Preparedness and Response Supplemental. As federal partners, we are happy to see this funding signed into law by President Donald Trump and stand ready to continue to assist the administration as needed.

It is encouraging to see the efforts the administration has utilized to ensure access to medical needs are met since the novel COVID-19 outbreak came to U.S. shores. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) guidance allowing private labs to administer tests and Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) adding a second code for labs in the Healthcare Common Procedure Coding System (HCPCS) is welcome news in light of the shortage of testing kits available. We also greatly appreciate the efforts by CMS to encourage private health insurers to cover diagnostic testing and reduce barriers such as prior-authorization and cost sharing for these services. We believe these steps will help alleviate the burden of this outbreak.

Our top priority is ensuring safety, security, and peace of mind for North Carolinians and all Americans. Recently, North Carolina's Department of Health and Human Services (NC DHHS) has made us aware that supplies for test kits are not yet adequate for the expected demand. We understand the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) has distributed tests for 75,000 people across the country and is currently ramping up production for more test kits to meet the growing demands. Unfortunately, North Carolina has not yet received additional test kits, which the CDC had indicated would be delivered this week at the latest. NC DHHS has made us aware they need further guidance on best practices to prioritize patients for testing given the limited supply of test kits currently available.

As North Carolina's federal representatives, we must ensure that our state receives the necessary resources to meet current and future demands. Accordingly, we are committed to working with you to ensure that North Carolina receives its additional supply of test kits and guidance on best practices for testing prioritization. We also look forward to the approval of additional Emergency Use Authorizations (EUAs), as appropriate, to allow other testing methods that are not limited by current or future supply issues.

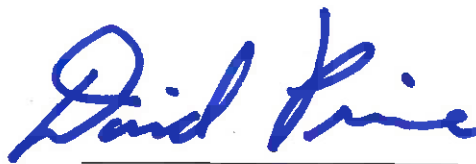
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We appreciate your leadership and continued partnership, and please let us know how we can support the administration's response efforts.

Sincerely,



Richard Hudson
Member of Congress



David E. Price
Member of Congress



Thom Tillis
U.S. Senator