

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20510

April 2, 2020

The Honorable MaryAnn Tierney
Regional Administrator
Federal Emergency Management Agency - Region III
U.S. Department of Homeland Security
15 Chestnut Street
One Independence Mall, Sixth Floor
Philadelphia, PA 19106-4404

Dear Regional Administrator Tierney:

We write as the Maryland Congressional Delegation in strong support of the State of Maryland's urgent request from the Maryland Emergency Management Agency (MEMA) to the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA). MEMA has identified six priority requests to FEMA, along with a follow-up item from the Major Disaster Declaration issued on March 27, 2020, for the State of Maryland. We request immediate approval of the following requests.

1. **Ventilators** - Ventilators are a requirement for treatment of COVID-19 patients in ICU beds and other respiratory conditions. On March 31st, the first Maryland hospital reported that it will need additional ventilators because it is running extremely low. Ventilators are necessary for both standing hospitals and alternate care sites. A lack of this precious resource will result in the deaths of patients who could have survived.
2. **PPE** - MEMA reports that it has been careful in rationing and distributing the State's limited Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) supplies, but it needs more to cover staff at surge locations, as well as at traditional medical sites. There are many open requests across the State for PPE which cannot be filled. Lack of PPE increases the likelihood of the virus spreading and the probability of healthcare practitioners becoming infected. If healthcare practitioners are infected, this directly impacts the outcome of sick Marylanders, depleting our critical staffing supply.
3. **Any testing chemical supplies** - It is much easier and clinically efficient to manage the COVID-19 hospital surge if testing is significantly scaled up and PPE can be distributed to those with the highest need. Labs are not operating at their full capacity because they cannot acquire the testing chemicals necessary to run the tests. Maryland has been proactive in setting up multiple testing sites around the State; however, Maryland lacks the testing supplies to test patients appropriately and stem the tide of this disease. If Maryland is unable to detect and treat those infected, this will have a direct impact on the number of cases and deaths within the broader National Capital Region (NCR).
4. **Nasopharyngeal (NP) Swabs** - If testing occurs more often, we will need more collection materials. The swabs, along with viral transport media, are key components of the collection kits for these tests. Without these supplies, we will not be able to detect and mitigate this virus.

5. **Pharmacy Cache for Medical Surge Site** - This cache is normally included in the Federal Medical Station (FMS) package (such as the one being currently set up at the Baltimore Convention Center) but was not available for the delivery. Having these resources available is key to ensuring that there are resources for the FMS in the event of a supply chain disruption and/or shortage as the surge reaches its peak. Patients, whether COVID-19 positive or not, frequently require other medications in a timely fashion, which is why it is so critical this cache is available and on site.

6. **Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) Mobile Labs / Examination Center – National Health and Nutrition Examination Survey (NHANES) Biospecific Program** – Doctors cannot determine what support or treatment is needed for sick patients without laboratory capability. A simple blood test can mean the difference between life and death when planning a patient's treatment. These mobile laboratories are critical for the State's Alternate Care Sites, by ensuring there is a rapid method, on-site, to protect the lives of those who have been entrusted to our care.

In addition to these six critical resource requests to FEMA, the Maryland Congressional Delegation strongly supports MEMA's request for approval of the Crisis Counseling Program (CCP) under the Individual Assistance (IA) portion of the Major Disaster Declaration for Maryland. This declaration was approved on March 27, 2020, but approval of CCP for Maryland is still under review.

CCP would support short-term interventions that involve the counseling goals of assisting disaster survivors in understanding their current situation and reactions, mitigating stress, assisting survivors in reviewing their disaster recovery options, promoting the use or development of coping strategies, providing supportive crisis counseling and education, providing emotional support and helping to develop coping skills, and encouraging linkages with other individuals and agencies who may help survivors in their recovery process. These services are provided at no cost and are available to survivors impacted by the disaster.

Crisis counseling seeks to prevent the onset of diagnosable disorders by helping survivors understand that they are experiencing common reactions to extraordinary occurrences. Counselors help enhance social and emotional connections to others in the community and promote effective coping strategies and resilience. Crisis counselors work closely with community organizations to understand available resources and refer and link survivors to behavioral health treatment and other needed services. Crisis counseling will provide invaluable support to Marylanders during the current COVID-19 pandemic.

Thank you for your consideration of this urgent request. We request immediate approval of MEMA's request to FEMA, and that you provide the Maryland Congressional Delegation with an immediate response to this inquiry.

Sincerely,

/s/ Benjamin L. Cardin
United States Senator

/s/ Chris Van Hollen
United States Senator

/s/ Steny H. Hoyer
Member of Congress

/s/ C.A. Dutch Ruppersberger
Member of Congress

/s/ John P. Sarbanes
Member of Congress

/s/ Andy Harris, M.D.
Member of Congress

/s/ Anthony G. Brown
Member of Congress

/s/ Jamie Raskin
Member of Congress

/s/ David Trone
Member of Congress