

Congress of the United States

Washington, D.C. 20515

January 28, 2020

The Honorable Michael R. Pompeo
Secretary of State
U.S. Department of State
2201 C Street NW
Washington, DC 20037

The Honorable Alex M. Azar II
Secretary of Health and Human Services
U.S. Department of Health and Human Services
200 Independence Avenue SW
Washington, DC 20201

To Secretary of State Mike Pompeo and Secretary of HHS Alex Azar,

We share in your goal to protect Americans from any threat posed by the coronavirus (2019-nCoV). To this end, we write to request more information about a State Department charter flight reportedly arriving at Ontario International Airport (ONT) in Ontario, California on the morning of Wednesday, January 29th, 2020, with 230 passengers from Wuhan, China on board.

Given the serious health threats posed by coronavirus in the Wuhan region, it is imperative that proper systems be in place prior to the plane's arrival to ensure the safety of residents in the region.

ONT is an official repatriation center, a designated place for Americans abroad to come home to safety, for the West Coast. We welcome news that this flight is bringing American diplomats and citizens out of harm's way, and we have full confidence in our local medical personnel and ONT staff to rise to this situation.

For this repatriation process to be successful, the federal government must provide ONT and San Bernardino County with all necessary support. We must ensure all public safety concerns for our community are addressed and regular operations at ONT are not impacted.

Please provide answers to the following questions without delay to help us better inform our constituents and ensure the federal response is adequate for the task at hand:

Flight from Wuhan, China to Ontario International Airport

1. Will passengers be screened in China before boarding? If passengers exhibit symptoms, what steps will be taken?
2. Will the plane stop in Anchorage? If so, will passengers deboard and be screened? If passengers are screened, will symptomatic patients be removed from the plane and treated in Anchorage?

3. What are the steps in place to ensure that passengers who develop symptoms midflight do not infect other passengers? Will medical personnel be on board the plane during the flight from Anchorage to ONT?

Arrival at Ontario International Airport

4. Is it confirmed that ONT is the final destination for the flight?
5. If so, what is the plan for when the passengers arrive in ONT?
 - a. Will passengers be screened immediately upon arrival? What tests will be used to screen the patients, and how long will it take to receive those results?
 - b. Will symptomatic passengers be immediately transported to local hospitals? If so, which local hospitals will be considered primary first responders, and how will that interact with current service operations?
6. Is there a quarantine protocol in place for passengers that arrive at ONT and are asymptomatic? If so, please answer the following questions:
 - a. What facility at ONT will be used to house the passengers?
 - b. What is the capacity of this facility?
 - c. How long should we expect these passengers to be quarantined at this point?
7. Do you expect more flights at this point to arrive at ONT? What is the plan if the capacity at ONT is reached?
8. What federal resources are being brought to bear by CDC, State, and other federal entities? Who is running point on the ground?
9. What is the current messaging plan to reassure the public? Where should we direct people with questions?

Resources required for potential national needs

10. What resources and funding streams will the State Department and the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) use to properly respond to this situation? Do the Departments have the statutory authority to use these funding streams (e.g., the Infectious Disease Rapid Response Reserve Fund)?
11. Are these financial resources projected to be sufficient for the response?
12. Does the State Department and HHS expect additional resources will be required? Do the Departments expect that additional immediate appropriations will be necessary to address this developing situation?

We look forward to receiving your timely response to our questions.

Sincerely,



NORMA J. TORRES
Member of Congress



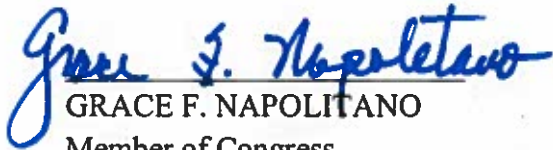
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