

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

July 17, 2020

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

Dear Secretary Azar:

We write to express our serious concern with regard to the need for increased allotments of Remdesivir as our state experiences a major increase in hospitalizations of patients afflicted with COVID-19.

As many of us recently communicated with you, Florida is experiencing an unacceptable backlog in delivery of the COVID-19 treatment, Remdesivir. Hospital clinicians are reporting that the drug is essential in treating COVID-19 patients as it reduces the need for ventilator use as well as the severity and length of illness.

It is our understanding that, on July 8, integral members of the administration and Coronavirus Task Force heard reports from 100 Florida hospitals and medical leaders that the state needs an emergency shipment of Remdesivir to avoid disruption of care. The hospitals were informed that they would receive two distributions totaling up to 130,000 vials in the near future. The Department of Health and Human Services' delivery of 17,080 vials to the state on July 10 was both immensely helpful and appreciated, but it is unfortunately far short of what Florida hospitals still require and were led to believe would be allotted.

Our hospitals and doctors are making clinical decisions about whether to initiate Remdesivir treatments based on assurances from federal officials that they will have supply of the drug. The shipments received last week have largely been depleted. Many hospitals throughout the state are on the verge of exhausting their supply even as they face a major increase in hospitalization of patients who will require Remdesivir during the early stages of their hospitalization.

Florida's hospitals are currently caring for more than 9,500 COVID-19 positive patients, with nearly 2,000 of those patients requiring ICU level of care. Based on the continued increase in hospitalizations, Florida will need an estimated 80,000 vials of Remdesivir to meet the demand and to continue to be able to provide this life-saving drug to patients until the next anticipated shipment on July 27, 2020. We urge you to take steps to expedite the delivery of

Remdesivir to remedy this shortage and to implement a process of distribution going forward that avoids any future backlogs in supplying this crucial drug to Florida hospitals.

Finally, our state is experiencing a shortage of reagent, which our hospitals and testing labs must have to process timely and reliable testing for COVID-19. The lack of this material results in excessive test result delays and greater demands on limited personal protective equipment for the health care workforce caring for those patients whose COVID-19 status is unknown and must be assumed positive. More specifically, to the extent that you may not already be doing so, we request that you reevaluate requests made by all states in early July to determine whether the same level of need still exists in other states before making the next allocation and to consider if a reallocation to states with higher needs is warranted.

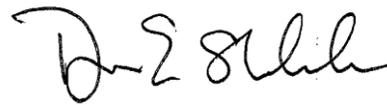
It is imperative that as Florida battles this pandemic that substantive steps be taken to dramatically shorten the time between evaluation of need and distribution of supplies. This should be done by utilizing real-time data reporting to steer Remdesivir, reagent, personal protective equipment, staffing and other critical personnel and supplies far more quickly to those states who need it the most.

Thank you for your attention to these critical issues and your prompt reply. We look forward to working with you to save the lives of Floridians.

Sincerely,



Marco Rubio
U.S. Senator



Donna E. Shalala
Member of Congress



Rick Scott
U.S. Senator



Charlie Crist
Member of Congress



Mario Diaz-Balart
Member of Congress



Ted Deutch
Member of Congress



Vern Buchanan
Member of Congress



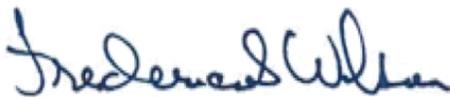
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Member of Congress



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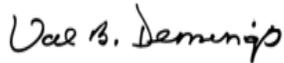
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