

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

February 13, 2020

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

Dear Secretary Azar:

As members of Congress representing Riverside County, California we urge you to reimburse the county for their expenses related to their role in receiving, testing, housing, and monitoring Americans returning from China.

As you know, on January 29, a flight from Wuhan, China was diverted to March Air Reserve Base (MARB) in Riverside, California. Riverside County responded efficiently and was effective in monitoring and quarantining passengers for 14-days until it could be determined that they did not have the Coronavirus. We appreciate your diligence in ensuring that none of the passengers coming from Wuhan are carrying the virus. Riverside County successfully stepped in to mitigate this potential public health emergency, and in the process incurred significant outlays. At the time of this letter, costs to the county have been nearly \$1.3 million for personnel, equipment, a mobile clinic, and emergency management standby.

The spread of the Coronavirus could lead to a worldwide pandemic, and it is imperative that we take every reasonable precaution to ensure that it does not spread. We want to ensure that county and local governments, who are often already running on tight budgets, are reimbursed in a timely manner. As with the public health emergencies of Ebola, Zika, and H1N1, local agencies need to be provided with federal funds to offset costs incurred in safeguarding our nation's public health and preventing the spread of harmful viruses. Rapid reimbursement leads to future readiness for addressing public health threats.

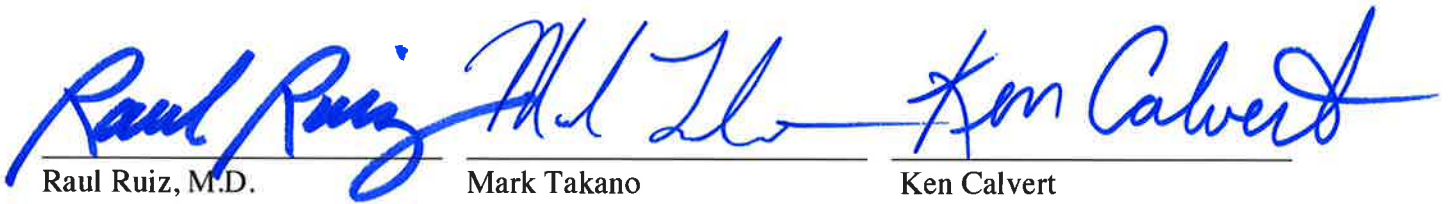
In an effort to assist our partners on the ground, we request timely responses to the following:

1. What is the process by which the County needs to apply for reimbursement?
2. What is the expected time frame for reimbursement?

As you work to identify resources to offset the costs to agencies across the country that have used their own money to help secure the public health, we encourage you to work quickly to ensure that they receive full and timely reimbursement for the costs they have incurred in carrying out this public service.

Thank you for your partnership in these critical efforts and for your consideration of this request.

Sincerely,

Handwritten signatures in blue ink for Raul Ruiz, Mark Takano, and Ken Calvert. Each signature is written over a horizontal line.

Raul Ruiz, M.D.
Member of Congress

Mark Takano
Member of Congress

Ken Calvert
Member of Congress