



KATE BROWN  
Governor

March 3, 2020

The Honorable Mike Pence  
Vice President of the United States  
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW  
Washington, DC 20501

Dear Vice President Pence:

Thank you for the briefing that you provided to Governors yesterday on COVID-19 coordination and preparedness. It is critical that states and the Administration remain in close contact as the situation develops, and I appreciate your pledge to convene us regularly moving forward. I write to share information about our efforts to prepare for and respond to the novel coronavirus in Oregon, as requested, and outline where additional federal assistance or resources are necessary.

The health and safety of Oregonians is my top priority. Like many Americans, Oregonians are concerned about the spread of COVID-19. My office is taking the situation extremely seriously and is working in close cooperation with our Medicaid Coordinated Care Organizations (CCOs), our hospitals and health systems, and our education providers to minimize the risk from COVID-19. While the risk of contracting the disease is currently low, we are proactively advising citizens to take every precaution to protect themselves, including handwashing, covering coughs and sneezes, and staying home if they are feeling ill. We are also prioritizing transparency and sharing information with the public as soon as we have it.

As you know, Oregon has three presumed positive cases, and 86 people are currently being monitored. We are actively conducting testing on a number of individuals to track the spread of the disease in Oregon. We are fortunate to have our own testing facility in the Portland metro area, which allows us to get results quickly and respond to those results immediately. Currently, 1,500 lab kits are stocked and we have capacity to process 80 test kits per day. Therefore, we are not requesting additional kits from the Centers for Disease Control (CDC) at this time.

However, like many states, we are concerned that we do not have a sufficient supply of Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) should the coronavirus spread more widely. While recent actions by the Federal Drug Administration (FDA) and CDC to make more respirators available to health care personnel may help in the short term, I urge you to release additional PPE supplies from the federal government's strategic national stockpile, including 400,000 N-95 respirators, gowns and gloves, Tyvek suits, Biocell Ambulance Protection Systems (Biocell-APS), and 75 to 100 ventilators.



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We would like to request flexibility on the testing criteria for COVID-19, covered under the emergency use authorization, to better assess the burden of the disease in Oregon resulting from community spread within the state. This would include provision of additional test kits for the Oregon State Public Health Laboratory.

Additionally, as a state with large rural and frontier regions, we have heard significant concerns from our small rural hospitals and health practices about potential workforce shortages and their ability to maintain appropriate staffing levels should this virus spread further. Those concerns are echoed by our local public health departments.

Through the Coronavirus Response Team I stood up last Friday, we are working through a number of emerging issues, including how best to reduce risk and provide services for unsheltered Oregonians, those living in congregate care, and those who rely on home health care workers. We are also assessing the availability of space to quarantine those who have no place to isolate themselves as the virus spreads.

Significant resources and funding will be needed in the days and months ahead to respond to and contain this outbreak. As the situation evolves, so too do our needs. We currently estimate our financial need at between \$7 million and \$10 million per month to support the additional resource needs for state and local public health, in addition to reimbursing the costs already incurred.

I appreciate the partnership of the federal government in tackling this public health threat, and look forward to continued coordination.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Kate Brown". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke extending to the right.

Kate Brown  
Governor of Oregon