



TOM O'HALLERAN
1ST DISTRICT, ARIZONA

April 10, 2020

Alex M. Azar II
Secretary
U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS)
Office of the Secretary
200 Independence Avenue, SW
Washington, D.C. 20201

Dear Secretary Azar:

I appreciate your hard work to ensure that Americans have the resources they need to effectively prepare for and respond to the 2019 Novel Coronavirus (COVID-19). I am pleased that Congress and the Administration worked closely in tandem to pass the Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security (CARES) Act to provide our state, local, and Tribal governments with financial assistance to mitigate the devastating economic effects of this public health emergency.

Within Arizona's First Congressional District, there are many rural and medically underserved areas that are especially vulnerable to widespread transmission of COVID-19 due to the lack of medical professionals, resources, and broadband infrastructure. For instance, the number of confirmed COVID-19 cases on the Navajo Nation have skyrocketed within recent weeks. As of Thursday evening, 558 Navajos had been tested positive – an increase of 70 cases within 24 hours.

Hospitals, health care centers, and first responders are in critical need of additional personnel and supplies. For example, the Flagstaff Medical Center is quickly running out of N95 masks and may need additional personnel to meet the increased demand. Equally concerning is the shortage of Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) available to first responders, like the Northwest Fire District, which serves the southernmost parts of Arizona's First Congressional District.

It is essential that all of our communities with unique needs receive adequate federal assistance in a very timely manner. I would urge that you do so as promptly and judiciously as possible, so that our communities can succeed in saving lives.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Tom O'Halleran".

Tom O'Halleran
Member of Congress