

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

March 9, 2020

Robert R. Redfield, MD
Director
Centers for Disease Control and Prevention
1600 Clifton Rd
Atlanta, GA 30333

Dr. Steven Hahn
Commissioner
Food and Drug Administration
10903 New Hampshire Avenue
Silver Spring, MD 20993

Dear Director Redfield and Commissioner Hahn,

We write to express our concerns regarding the spread of COVID-19 and urge for the expedited approval of expanding local testing to New York City. As our nation enters the next phase of its collective response to the COVID-19 outbreak, all levels of government must collaborate seamlessly to ensure that quick and expansive testing is readily available. The work of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) are essential to the response by the City of New York, and cities across the nation, to this public health emergency. The delivery of testing kits by the CDC to New York City's Public Health Laboratory (PHL) was a step in the right direction. However, as the nation's most populous city responds to this emergency, it is already clear that the current testing capacity is insufficient to meet our public health needs, which is why we call for automated testing and other resources.

As the number of identified cases in New York City grows, rapid detection is necessary to contain the spread of the virus. New York State, in collaboration with New York City, developed its own testing protocol that could increase NYC's testing capacity after FDA approval, validation and implementation. However, more must be done.

In addition, the spread of COVID-19 has been exacerbated by frequent travel between infected and non-infected areas. The CDC and U.S. Customs and Border Protection (CBP) must work together to standardize the assessment of all travelers at all ports of entry across the United States, specifically regarding whether any and all travelers exhibit symptoms of COVID-19.

As such, given these concerns, we request the following:

- (1) The FDA to expedite the approval of testing approaches developed by manufacturers of clinical infectious disease diagnostics, clinical laboratories, and other entities. FDA approval of testing methods and kits would further increase New York City's testing capacity to enable prompt action and response.
- (2) The FDA and CDC to expeditiously authorize and implement automated COVID-19 testing to effectively respond to the current testing demand.
- (3) The CDC to issue clarification on how the CDC and CBP are working together to establish uniform criteria for when a traveler should undergo enhanced COVID-19 screening at ports of entry.

Given the urgency of this matter, we appreciate a response by Friday, March 13, 2020.

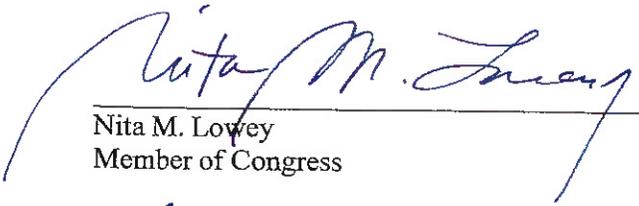
Sincerely,



Grace Meng
Member of Congress

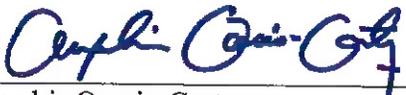


Nydia M. Velázquez
Member of Congress

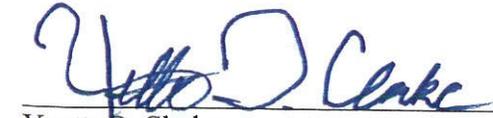

Nita M. Lowey
Member of Congress


Adriano Espaillat
Member of Congress


Gregory W. Meeks
Member of Congress


Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez
Member of Congress


José E. Serrano
Member of Congress


Yvette D. Clarke
Member of Congress


Eliot Engel
Member of Congress


Carolyn Maloney
Member of Congress


Jerrold Nadler
Member of Congress


Max Rose
Member of Congress


Hakeem Jeffries
Member of Congress


Kathleen M. Rice
Member of Congress