

Congress of the United States
House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515-0506

May 18, 2020

Dr. Sonia Y. Angell
Director and State Health Officer
California Department of Public Health
PO Box 997377
Sacramento, CA 95899-7377

Dear Dr. Angell,

I write today to request the state's assistance with Sacramento's efforts to expand countywide testing capacity and to bolster COVID-19 surveillance in long-term care facilities and nursing homes. The Paycheck Protection Program and Health Care Enhancement Act, passed by Congress in late April, included \$25 billion in federal funding for a new coronavirus testing program. This bill provided \$499,203,108 to the State of California for purchasing and performing COVID-19 tests, conducting contact tracing, scaling up laboratory capacity, and supporting our public health workforce.

As California takes steps towards a gradual reopening, widespread testing is essential to understand the virus' prevalence in our communities and to mitigate future outbreaks. As of early May, Sacramento County was able to test between 1,500 to 2,000 people each day via a growing network of drive-through testing locations, public and private labs, and hospitals. However, Sacramento County will need to test more than 2,300 people a day and dramatically increase its contact tracing workforce in order to safely reopen, per the criteria outlined by Governor Newsom.

Nursing homes and long-term care settings across the country have been among the hardest hit by the pandemic. More than 1,000 nursing home residents in California have died of COVID-19-related complications, accounting for nearly half of the state's overall deaths. I appreciate the Department of Public Health's guidance to test all those who work and reside in a facility, in response to the confirmation of a COVID-19 case. However, it is becoming increasingly clear that the virus may be spreading in congregate settings via asymptomatic carriers. Coupled with the fact that nursing homes and long-term care facilities are often home to residents with high risks for health complications, we will not be able to protect this vulnerable population without the means to proactively test and closely monitor all those who live and work at these facilities.

The funding Congress directed to states to support coronavirus testing can include, but is not limited to, expenses for manufacturing, purchasing, administering, and expanding capacity.

Dr. Sonia Angell
Page 2
May 18, 2020

The Center for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) has recommended that residents in long-term facilities be considered top priority for testing, and that residents should be separated based on infection status. In my district, Sacramento County has a plan to test all residents and healthcare workers in skilled nursing facilities and support CDC separation recommendations. Critically, these plans can only be carried out effectively if we have adequate levels of tests and testing supplies. As California prepares to distribute testing funds to its counties, I urge you to direct appropriate resources to Sacramento County to support this critical work and the safety of our community.

Thank you for your urgent attention to this matter.

Sincerely,



DORIS O. MATSUI
Member of Congress

cc California Coronavirus Testing Task Force