

Congress of the United States
Washington D.C. 20515

April 3, 2020

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

Dear Secretary Azar,

I am writing regarding reports that the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) has failed to fully utilize all available sources of existing ventilators across the various federal stockpiles.

Specifically, I am concerned with reports that your agency has failed to provide shipping locations to the Department of Defense (DOD) for the 2,000 ventilators the DOD has ready to deploy.¹ This is especially concerning due to the fact that the DOD made these ventilators available to HHS on at least March 18th.²

As you know, the shortage of ventilators across the country is putting a severe strain on the ability of our hospitals to treat individuals infected with and recovering from COVID-19. On March 28th, Governor Polis of Colorado sent a letter to Vice President Pence reiterating that Colorado is in urgent need of 10,000 ventilators and numerous other Personal Protective Equipment requested from both HHS and the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA).³

Given the severe need both in Colorado and the rest of the country, it is unacceptable that HHS has failed to provide the necessary direction to the DOD to make the ventilators immediately available to states like Colorado that are sorely needed to save lives.

In light of these concerns, I am requesting that you immediately provide an update on the status of the distribution of the DOD's ventilators and if no ventilators have been distributed, why that is the case.

Sincerely,



Diana DeGette
Member of Congress

¹ <https://thehill.com/policy/defense/490484-pentagon-has-not-yet-sent-2000-ventilators-due-to-lack-of-shipment-location>

² <https://www.politico.com/newsletters/morning-defense/2020/03/18/pentagons-coronavirus-response-kicks-in-786165>

³ <https://www.denverpost.com/2020/04/02/coronavirus-polis-letter-mike-pence-ppe-covid/>