



April 23, 2020

The Honorable Tim Ryan
The United States House of Representatives
1126 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Elissa Slotkin
The United States House of Representatives
1531 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Representatives Ryan and Slotkin,

On behalf of the Infectious Diseases Society of America (IDS A) and the HIV Medicine Association (HIVMA), we write to offer our support for the Medical Supply Chain Emergency Act (H.R. 6390), bipartisan legislation which would require the president to use authorities under the Defense Production Act (DPA) to require emergency production of medical equipment to address the COVID-19 pandemic. IDS A and HIVMA represent over 12,000 infectious diseases and HIV physicians, scientists, and other healthcare and public health professionals on the frontlines of the COVID-19 response.

Despite previous COVID-19 legislative packages providing crucial funding for the purchase of essential medical supplies, including personal protective equipment (PPE), testing supplies and ventilators, and despite the administration activating elements of the DPA, the infectious diseases community continues to experience firsthand the consequences of critical shortages of fundamental medical supplies. We are experiencing firsthand the impact of not fully utilizing the DPA and the lack of a strong, coherent national strategy for medical supplies and testing. Without a coordinated path for the delivery of PPE and testing supplies and medical equipment, we will continue to lack the tools we need to effectively contain the spread of COVID-19 and safely care for patients. Already health care providers represent 20% of those infected with COVID-19 and continue to contract COVID-19 with deaths occurring, weakening our workforce at a time when we are most needed. This cascade of inadequate PPE, exposure while caring for infected individuals, and the spread of COVID-19 to critical medical personnel hampers our efforts to get ahead of this deadly virus and save lives.

IDS A and HIVMA are pleased that the Medical Supply Chain Emergency Act would establish a national strategy for the rapid manufacture and appropriate distribution of medical supplies. We understand the Medical Supply Chain Emergency Act directs the administration to fully utilize all available mechanisms, including complete activation of the Defense Production Act. We appreciate that the legislation ensures that PPE and medical equipment is distributed to states in most immediate need, based on the numbers of cases and populations at heightened risk for COVID-19. This strategy would—and should—be adjusted and become more targeted as testing capacity, surveillance, and epidemiologic data is expanded.

Further, we applaud you for provisions in the bill that name the federal government as the central coordinator to oversee these efforts. This clarifies the process of decision-making for the distribution of medical supplies and equipment. This is a critical step to ensuring accountability and establishing federal oversight of the private sector supply chain to best assist states, health care facilities, and health care providers delivering life-saving care to patients with COVID-19 disease.

Thank you for your leadership on this important issue. If you have questions or require additional information, please do not hesitate to contact Amanda Jezek, IDSA Senior Vice President for Public Policy and Government Relations at ajezek@idsociety.org, or Andrea Weddle, HIVMA Executive Director at aweddle@hivma.org.

Sincerely,



Thomas M. File, Jr., MD, MSc
Fellow of the IDSA
President, IDSA



Judith Feinberg, MD
Fellow of the IDSA
Chair, HIVMA