



UNITED STATES CONGRESS

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March 14, 2020

Alex Azar
Secretary
Department of Health and Human Services
200 Independence Ave SW
Washington DC 20201

Dear Secretary Azar:

As the Representative for Travis Air Force Base in Solano County, California. I am closely monitoring the quarantine that's taking place on base. As you know, hundreds of Californians from the Grand Princess Cruise were evacuated to Travis Air Force Base beginning Monday, March 9 after 22 passengers and crew on ship tested positive for the novel coronavirus. As the quarantine has progressed, a number of my constituents have informed me of conditions that are not in line with the procedures outlined to Congress or expectations for a medical quarantine.

Congress was informed that Grand Princess passengers would be medically screened at the Port of Oakland, and then safely transported to a military installation for testing and a 14-day quarantine. Unfortunately, this testing has still not occurred. Instead, passengers were told that they "...may choose to be tested for COVID-19. Please be advised that if you test positive, CDC may legally detain you until it finds that you are no longer at risk of spreading the disease to others." Sadly, this language suggests that requesting a test will indefinitely prolong the participant's quarantine and incentivizes passengers to forgo a test. What's more, I've been informed by passengers who were not deterred by the language, and requested a test that they have not been able to receive one. To date, I am not aware of a single test being administered at Travis Air Force Base.

I've also received troubling images of long lines without social distancing for communal meals and beverages. I've been told by individuals within the quarantine that evacuees touched serving utensils and other items with their bare hands, potentially exposing others to the virus. I am glad to hear that meals are now delivered to individual rooms after I brought this issue to the attention of HHS staff. However I am troubled to hear that coffee is still served in communal areas, rather than brewed in existing coffee makers in the individuals' rooms.

I've also heard that there are inadequate hand washing and surface cleaning materials on site. From what I have been told, the only hand washing available to individuals is a bar of soap in their rooms. While HHS has contracted with a cleaning service for the building, I have heard that it is understaffed to maintain the standard of cleaning required in a medical quarantine and the number of individuals staying in the hotel. This negligence has left frequently touched surfaces improperly sanitized, and failed to provide cleaning services and fresh bedding, blankets, and towels for individual rooms.

I am also concerned about the lack of information provided to the evacuees within the quarantine. Upon arriving at the hotel, they were given paperwork that provided scant details beyond the Center for Disease Control's (CDC) legal authority to hold them in detention. Very little information was given on social distancing, frequent washing, and other procedures that evacuees could use to keep themselves healthy in this high risk environment. CDC should be utilizing every resource possible to equip these individuals with the knowledge they need to stay healthy.

In light of these troubling accusations, I demand your immediate attention to investigate and resolve the issues outlined above, including:

- Availability of testing to all passengers of the ship
- Limiting high touch surfaces whenever possible, such as utilizing the coffee machines in rooms
- Individual access to hand washing stations, sanitizer, and cleaning solutions
- Inadequate cleaning on high touch surfaces
- Limited staffing and clear communication to guests.

As public servants, there is no greater priority than the health and safety of the communities we represent. I urge you to address this matter immediately, and I look forward to your response.

Sincerely,



JOHN GARAMENDI
Member of Congress

CC:

President Donald Trump

Vice President Mike Pence

CDC Director Robert R. Redfield, MD