

Dr. Gregory Fox  
Rhode Island Chapter of the American Academy of Pediatrics  
290 Hope Street  
Bristol, RI 02809-2029

Dear Dr. Fox:

Thank you for contacting me with your concerns regarding the novel coronavirus (COVID-19) and the shortage of staff and personal protective equipment (PPE). I appreciate hearing from you.

I have endless respect and gratitude for our doctors, nurses, first responders, and other frontline workers who are working tirelessly to treat patients and stop the spread of COVID-19. Many Rhode Islanders have contacted me with their concerns regarding staff shortages and the lack of medical supplies and PPE available to our frontline workers. This is unacceptable. Ensuring that health care workers have the medical supplies and protection they need should be a top national priority. The stunning negligence and incompetence of the administration's preparation has created very difficult challenges for these front line heroes.

I have fought hard to ensure that the emergency measures Congress has passed include sufficient resources for our frontline workers. I am proud to report that the Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security Act provides over \$100 billion in direct payments to hospitals and the health care system, which can be used to purchase diagnostic supplies, ventilators, and PPE. This historic measure, which the Senate passed unanimously, also includes a \$16 billion federal investment to replenish the Strategic National Stockpile supplies of pharmaceuticals, PPE, and other medical supplies. Further, the law authorizes \$1 billion for the Department of Defense to utilize the Defense Procurement Act to invest in manufacturing PPE and medical equipment. Please know I will continue to urge the federal government to expedite the acquisition and distribution of PPE and other critical supplies to our frontline health care workers and first responders.

Once again, thank you for taking the time to contact me. As we all try to make our way through these challenging times, I want you to know that I'm continuing to fight every day to make sure Rhode Island families have access to the health services and economic resources they need. If my office can help direct you to local resources, please call us at (401) 453-5294. For questions about COVID-19, you can reach the Rhode Island information line at (401) 222-8022 during business hours or at 211 after hours, or by email at [RIDOH.COVID19Questions@health.ri.gov](mailto:RIDOH.COVID19Questions@health.ri.gov). You can also visit [www.cdc.gov](http://www.cdc.gov) or [www.health.ri.gov](http://www.health.ri.gov) for the most updated information. Please don't hesitate to be in touch again if I can address any other issue of interest or concern to you.

Sincerely,



Sheldon Whitehouse  
United States Senator