



CITY OF HOUSTON

Health and Fire Departments

Sylvester Turner

Mayor

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Rear Admiral Erica Schwartz
Deputy Surgeon General
U.S. Public Health Service

On behalf of Mayor Sylvester Turner, I am respectfully requesting that the federal government continue its full commitment and support of the public health containment and mitigation strategies in Houston Texas through the FEMA Covid-19 testing sites.

As you know the City of Houston is the fourth largest city in the United States with a population of approximately 2.4 million and home to the most diverse metropolitan community in the nation. The critical infrastructure and key resources unique to Houston are paramount to numerous industries affecting the entire nation to include supply chain, medical research, and energy services. With two international airports, a port critical to the supply of goods and services, and the hub of energy production and services for the nation Houston's health is important not only to Texas, but to America.

The federal support of testing sites has been critical to our largely successful efforts to protect our families, neighbors and infrastructure from the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic till now. We have been able to delay the projected peak of Covid-19 cases for the fourth largest city in the United States since mid-April. However, the number of new cases and admissions to local hospitals is beginning to rise. We have seen a nearly four-fold increase in hospital admission not only within hospitals in the city but across Harris County since May 21st. Yesterday we set a new record for COVID-19 patients in local hospital intensive care units which is nearly 3 times what was in the ICU's on May 21st. Losing the support of the Federal government for testing sites will undoubtedly have catastrophic cascading consequences in the regions ability to adequately test, quarantine and isolate ultimately blunting the progression of Covid-19. We are rapidly increasing our response efforts to include hiring, training and deploying new personnel to investigate new cases, track contacts and try to effect isolation and quarantine of those persons. We do understand that your support cannot last forever, however the testing sites are operating at a high rate and are very efficient in their processes. Loss of FEMA support as it

currently stands will place an unnecessarily difficult operational burden on our response operations and divert funds and distract efforts as we work feverishly to get ahead of the virus.

Consequently, it is my request and hope that you will continue your full support and recommendation that FEMA support for the testing sites in Houston and Harris County Texas until August 30, 2020.

In closing, I want to thank your entire team for your support to date.

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David Persse, MD