



March 28, 2020

The Honorable Michael R. Pence
Vice President of the United States
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue, N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20500

Dear Vice President Pence:

I am writing to ask for your help addressing the dire shortage of personal protective equipment (PPE) and ventilators in Colorado, as we prepare for a calamitous increase of deadly COVID-19 cases over the next few weeks.

We are facing a crisis-level shortage of these essential supplies to protect our health care workers and first responders. Colorado's COVID-19 death rate is rising faster than any other state right now; the pandemic is spreading so fast that lags in testing are masking the true conditions experienced by Coloradans across the state. I fear that because of our comparably smaller population, the staggering increases in cases and deaths are not fully registering in national models. What we are experiencing in Colorado is far worse than we imagined. We are in this emergency despite the fact that I have issued a state-wide stay at home order, in addition to numerous, aggressive social-distancing Executive Orders.

The PPE shortage is at an emergency level in our rural communities like Breckenridge, Aspen, and Vail. Hospital staff in Western Slope facilities have been pulled off the floor to start sewing flimsy cloth surgical masks. A hospital on the Eastern Plains can't meet minimum staffing needs because workers have stopped showing up to work in fear of contracting COVID-19 without adequate protection. Their fear is warranted -- more and more health care workers are testing positive every day.

Most parts of Colorado have fewer ICU beds per capita than the national average. For example, Fort Collins is experiencing a major surge in hospitalizations, but only have $\frac{1}{3}$ of the national average for per capita ICU beds. Further, because of our recognition as a multi-state regional referral center, we are starting to receive some of the highest-intensity COVID-19 patients from neighboring states. We are committed to proving this regional excellence, but our ability to do so will soon be shuttered if we cannot protect our health care workers in our already resource-constrained facilities.

I am a Coloradan and an American; I understand you have an obligation to steward limited resources across our entire country. That is why I have established a first in the country state-based innovation team to open up new supply channels and coordinate the numerous Colorado companies looking to partner to manufacture life-saving supplies. But despite these extraordinary

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efforts, our best estimates show that we are weeks away from receiving our first deliveries from new suppliers or taking product of new manufacturing lines for live-saving ventilators and essential PPE. Further, in these next few weeks we expect the biggest jumps in new COVID-19 cases and the resulting victims requiring ventilators. In other words, these next few weeks are a make or break moment for us. I am asking for your partnership and help in this critical moment.

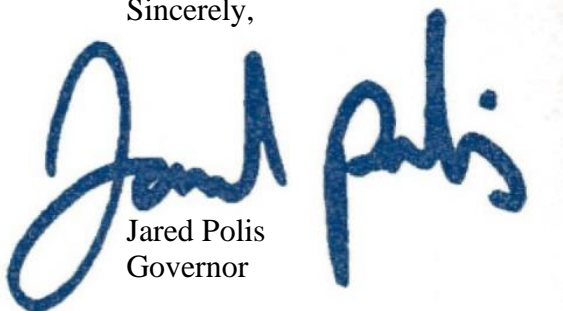
As reflected in our requests to FEMA and HHS, we are in need of:

- 10,000 ventilators, and associated equipment and pharmaceuticals
- 2,000,000 N95 masks
- 4,460,000 surgical masks
- 720,000 gowns
- 880,000 face shields
- 4,300,000 pair gloves -- small, medium, and large

We received another SNS shipment last night with about 120,000 N95s, 287,000 surgical masks, 62,413 face shields, 51,000 gowns, 368,514 gloves, and 3,528 coveralls. These make a difference and buy us some time. But, as we prepare for the next few weeks, we know we will need more to keep our health care workers safe in order to save as many patient lives as possible.

I am asking that you increase the ventilators and PPE that is being sent to Colorado for this critical moment, to help us safely cross the bridge ahead of us until we can start to reap the benefits of our other unprecedented procurement and manufacturing efforts. I hope you will give this request your full consideration.

Sincerely,



Jared Polis
Governor

CC: The Honorable Michael Bennet, United States Senator
The Honorable Cory Gardner, United States Senator