

U.S. Sen. Baldwin, Democrats: Press Trump administration to reverse move undermining COVID-19 hospital data collection and reporting

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WASHINGTON, D.C. - Today, U.S. Senator Tammy Baldwin, a member of the Senate Health, Education, Labor and Pensions (HELP) Committee, and 45 of her Democratic Senate colleagues wrote to Vice President Mike Pence, and Coronavirus Task Force Coordinator Dr. Deborah Birx, urging the Trump Administration to reverse recent changes requiring hospitals to report data to a new system set up by the Department of Health and Human Services instead of the National Healthcare Safety Network (NHSN) which is run by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and has been in use for over a decade.

“We write today to urge you to withdraw your confusing and harmful changes to hospital reporting requirements for Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19). In the midst of a global pandemic, these changes pose serious challenges to the nation’s response by increasing the data management burden for hospitals, potentially delaying critical supply shipments, compromising access to key data for many states, and reducing transparency for the public. The Trump Administration’s mismanagement of the COVID-19 response and refusal to heed public health expertise continue to put the country in a dangerous position,” write the Senators.

The letter details how the sudden switch to the new system could undermine the COVID-19 response on several fronts: hospitals unable to switch within 48 hours could lose access to critical supplies; states who have built their own response and data systems on the NHSN could lose access to critical information; and the

decision to circumvent CDC could lead to disruption in the data collected, questions about its accuracy, and hampered access for public health experts and the general public.

Before posing several questions to Administration about the shift, the Senators' letter concludes, **"Without adequate data, the country has been unable to appropriately adjust our response to COVID-19—a reality highlighted by the dearth of reliable data on the heavy burden of COVID-19 on communities of color and other vulnerable populations. The American people deserve to know the true scope of the pandemic, and that can only happen if public health experts lead in collecting and reporting data accurately and transparently. By abruptly changing the reporting process by requiring hospitals to report to HHS and circumventing CDC, we are concerned there will be a disruption in the data collected and questions about the accuracy of that data."**

In addition to Baldwin, the letter was led by Senator Patty Murray (D-WA), ranking member of the HELP Committee, and also signed by Senators Gary Peters (D-MI), Chuck Schumer (D-NY), Amy Klobuchar (D-MN), Richard Blumenthal (D-CT), Robert Menendez (D-NJ), Michael Bennet (D-CO), Sherrod Brown (D-OH), Tom Carper (D-DE), Bob Casey (D-PA), Dick Durbin (D-IL), Ed Markey (D-MA), Tom Udall (D-NM), Jack Reed (D-RI), Ron Wyden (D-OR), Debbie Stabenow (D-MI), Tim Kaine (D-VA), Martin Heinrich (D-NM), Patrick Leahy (D-VT), Ben Cardin (D-MD), Jeanne Shaheen (D-NH), Elizabeth Warren (D-MA), Tina Smith (D-MN), Sheldon Whitehouse (D-RI), Angus King (I-ME), Bernie Sanders (I-VT), Cory Booker (D-NJ), Maria Cantwell (D-WA), Catherine Cortez Masto (D-NV), Kirsten Gillibrand (D-NY), Maggie Hassan (D-NH), Doug Jones (D-AL), Kamala Harris (D-CA), Chris Van Hollen (D-MD), Mazie Hirono (D-HI), Brian Schatz (D-HI), Chris Coons (D-DE), Jeff Merkley (D-OR), Chris Murphy (D-CT), Mark Warner (D-VA), Tammy Duckworth (D-IL), Jacky Rosen (D-NV), Jon Tester (D-MT), Dianne Feinstein (D-CA) and Joe Manchin (D-WV).

See the full text of the letter below. A PDF is available [here](#).