

U.S. Sen. Baldwin: Urges administration to send medical staff to support states with rise in coronavirus infections

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WASHINGTON, D.C. – U.S. Senator Tammy Baldwin (D-WI) joined her colleagues led by Senators Amy Klobuchar (D-MN), Bernie Sanders (I-VT) and Tina Smith (D-MN) to send a letter to U.S. Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) Administrator Peter Gaynor and Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) Secretary Alex Azar, urging the Administration to address the unprecedented rise in coronavirus infections and hospitalizations by swiftly responding to state requests for additional medical staff.

Wisconsin is averaging 6,209 coronavirus cases per day over the past seven days, and more than 2,000 Wisconsinites are currently hospitalized. Across the country this week, hospitalizations due to coronavirus infection peaked in at least 22 states, and 23 states currently have over 1,000 patients hospitalized with coronavirus infections. Baldwin, Klobuchar, Sanders, and Smith were joined by Senators Kyrsten Sinema (D-AZ), Richard Blumenthal (D-CT), Jeff Merkley (D-OR), Chris Van Hollen (D-MD) and Jacky Rosen (D-NV).

“As cases surge across the country, states require significantly more support to address pressing medical staffing shortages. If infection rates continue to rise as we enter the holiday season and people spend more time indoors, this pressing need

for additional medical staff will become even more acute,” **the Senators wrote.** *“We respectfully request that you take action to proactively extend the current federal support that FEMA and HHS are providing to states and swiftly send additional medical professionals to states that are experiencing a surge in coronavirus cases and deaths.”*

Full text of letter can be found [HERE](#) and below:

Dear Administrator Gaynor and Secretary Azar,

We write to express our concern about the rising rate of coronavirus infections in states across the nation and to respectfully request that you send additional health care professionals to states experiencing a surge in cases and a shortage of medical staff available to treat infected patients.

Many states are experiencing an unprecedented rise in coronavirus cases, coupled with increasing hospitalization rates. Last week, the United States experienced a record-breaking number of new cases recorded in a single day, with more than 132,000 cases reported on November 6 alone.

The rapid increase in cases is not confined to any one part of the country—23 states have recorded more cases in the past week than in any other seven-day period since the pandemic began. Hospitalizations due to coronavirus infection peaked in 16 states last Wednesday, and 20 states currently have over 1,000 patients hospitalized with coronavirus infections.

This surge in infections and hospitalizations is putting a strain on our already exhausted health care systems and essential care workers, who are not immune

from the virus. These workers have been on the frontlines since the pandemic began and many have been infected with the virus or have been required to quarantine due to exposure to the virus—resulting in serious health care staffing shortages across the nation. These pandemic-induced staffing shortages have shuttered clinics, emptied local health departments, and in some cases forced hospitals to ask workers exposed to the virus to continue working.

We appreciate the medical staffing support that the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) and the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) have already provided to states, which has been critical in helping these states treat infected patients during the pandemic. But as cases surge across the country, states require significantly more support to address pressing medical staffing shortages. If infection rates continue to rise as we enter the holiday season and people spend more time indoors, this pressing need for additional medical staff will become even more acute.

Therefore, we respectfully request that you take action to proactively extend the current federal support that FEMA and HHS are providing to states and swiftly send additional medical professionals to states that are experiencing a surge in coronavirus cases and deaths.

Thank you for your time and attention to this important matter. We look forward to working with you to continue providing support for Americans during the coronavirus pandemic.

Sincerely,

An online version of this release is available [here](#).