

U.S. Sen. Johnson: HSGAC hearing discusses options to enhance Strategic National Stockpile's pandemic preparedness

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WASHINGTON — The Senate Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs Committee held a [hearing](#) Wednesday to discuss how the U.S. government can enhance the Strategic National Stockpile's preparedness efforts moving forward.

In his opening statement, Chairman Ron Johnson (R-Wis.) noted, "In developing a plan for the committee's oversight of the federal government's response to the coronavirus, the role of the Strategic National Stockpile was an obvious area of interest. I had assumed that staff would be able to quickly obtain the list of items that should be held, together with the required and actual inventory levels of each item. ... We quickly found out that those lists do not exist, or certainly are not made available to Congress or the public.

"As we will hear in testimony, it's not from a lack of dedicated individuals working within the agencies or with the SNS. Instead, it seems to be a more pervasive problem of a lack of clarity and understanding of exactly what the SNS's role is and what it should be. ...

"We are paying the price for this lack of articulation and clarity during the current pandemic. The frustration expressed by state, local, tribal and territorial governments and their elected representatives is largely caused by the reality that demand for so many of the needed products and supplies has dramatically exceeded the supply – both in the form of available inventory and production capacity. ...

“As the men and women working tirelessly to address the current demand develop data and models, that information needs to be captured and put to immediate use updating and redesigning the structure and management of the SNS.”