United States Senate
WASHINGTON, DC 20510

December 14, 2020

Dr. Moncef Slaoui
Chief Advisor, Operation Warp Speed
1400 Defense Pentagon
Washington, DC 20301

General Gustave Perna
Chief Operating Officer, Operation Warp Speed
1400 Defense Pentagon
Washington, DC 20301

Dear Dr. Slaoui and General Perna:

We write to you about reports the United States Government declined to exercise its option to purchase additional doses of the Pfizer COVID-19 vaccine earlier this year. We are concerned the failure to secure an adequate supply of vaccines will needlessly prolong the COVID-19 pandemic in this country, causing further loss of life and economic devastation. We fear this is yet another instance in which the Trump Administration's failure to develop a comprehensive national vaccines plan in a timely manner could jeopardize efforts to get people vaccinated and ultimately end this pandemic.

While we are encouraged by the Food and Drug Administration's decision to grant an emergency use authorization for Pfizer's COVID-19 vaccine candidate, we are concerned that the Trump Administration's decision not to purchase more doses when given the opportunity will mean this development will not have the impact it could have to protect families from COVID-19. According to news reports, Pfizer offered the United States Government the chance to pre-purchase doses of its COVID-19 vaccine in excess of the initial order for 100 million doses.[1] When doing so, Pfizer reportedly warned that demand for its vaccine would likely outpace supply. However, the Trump Administration declined that offer; in consequence, the United States Government will not be able to purchase additional supply from Pfizer until pre-orders from other countries are filled. The European Union has finalized a deal with Pfizer for up to 300 million doses, and Canada has agreements to purchase up to 76 million doses.[2]

There have been over 16 million cases of COVID-19 in the United States and over 299,000 associated deaths. Hospitals across the country are at capacity and facing increasing numbers of infections in the coming weeks. The number of daily COVID-19 deaths soared to a new high of over 3,200 last week.[3] Our government must widely distribute safe and effective COVID-19 vaccines that can be administered to patients at no cost as soon as possible to help stop transmission of this deadly virus in our communities. Yet, if we do not have sufficient vaccines

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[1] https://www.nytimes.com/2020/12/07/us/trump-covid-vaccine-pfizer.html
[2] https://www.nytimes.com/2020/12/07/us/trump-covid-vaccine-pfizer.html; https://www.wsj.com/articles/canada-authorizes-covid-19-vaccine-from-pfizer-and-biontech-11607531030
[3] https://covidtracking.com/data/charts/us-daily-deaths

purchased, there will soon be nothing to distribute. Reports last week indicate the U.S. may face a "vaccine cliff" this spring, due to the Trump Administration's failure to purchase sufficient doses of vaccine.[4]

Operation Warp Speed anticipates distributing vaccines for 20 million people this month and 50 million people by the end of January. Limited supplies of vaccines, however, will force experts to make hard decisions about who should receive the first doses of the vaccine. Indeed, millions of Americans may not receive the vaccine for months or nearly a year. The longer it takes to vaccinate people, the longer it will be until we can have a meaningful recovery from this pandemic.

Given these reports, we are very concerned the Trump Administration has not adequately planned for vaccine demand in the coming months, potentially imperiling the public health. To earn public confidence, demonstrate accountability, and ensure the incoming Biden Administration has the information it needs to hit the ground running in getting our COVID-19 response on track, the Administration must be more transparent about its preparations, as well as how much funding is available, and is needed, to purchase, distribute, and administer sufficient vaccine to end this pandemic.

To provide this transparency, we respectfully request a briefing to respond to the following questions by December 28, 2020.

1. What is your current projection of how many vaccine doses are necessary to vaccinate the entire population?
2. How much vaccine has the United States Government contracted, and paid, for?
   a. How many doses of the Pfizer vaccine are contracted for delivery between now and April 1, 2021? How many are contracted for delivery between April 1 and July 1, 2021? How many are contracted for delivery after July 1, 2021?
   b. Did the United States Government have the opportunity to purchase additional doses of the Pfizer vaccine? If so:
      i. How many doses did Pfizer offer, and under what terms and conditions?
      ii. Why did the United States Government not accept this offer?
3. How much vaccine does the United States Government have a contract option to purchase, and with which manufacturers?
   a. How much funding is available to make these purchases?
   b. How much more funding, above the amount described in 3(a), is needed to exercise all contract options in full?
   c. How much more funding, above the amount described in 3(a), is needed to purchase the number of doses described in 1?

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[4] https://www.politico.com/news/2020/12/08/coronavirus-vaccine-shortage-443839

Sincerely,

Patty Murray
United States Senator

Ron Wyden
United States Senator

Elizabeth Warren
United States Senator

Sherrod Brown
United States Senator

Tammy Baldwin
United States Senator

Jeanne Shaheen
United States Senator

Cory A. Booker
United States Senator

Jeffrey A. Merkley
United States Senator

Robert Menendez
United States Senator

Margaret Wood Hassan
United States Senator

Debbie Stabenow
United States Senator

Tammy Duckworth
United States Senator

Gary C. Peters
United States Senator

/s/ Martin Heinrich

Martin Heinrich
United States Senator

Richard J. Durbin
United States Senator

Christopher S. Murphy
United States Senator

Richard Blumenthal
United States Senator

/s/ Brian Schatz

Brian Schatz
United States Senator