



August 7, 2020

The Honorable Elizabeth Warren
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Senator Warren:

Thank you for your thoughtful letter to me regarding the Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19) pandemic and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's (CDC) legal authorities to implement and enforce public health measures.

Public health measures are implemented within a U.S. federal system that divides responsibilities between the federal and state governments. States have police power functions to protect the health, safety, and welfare of persons within their borders, whereas under its delegated legal authorities, CDC primarily acts to prevent disease spread at arriving ports of entry and interstate. Local governments, such as counties, cities, and other municipalities, may also exercise police power functions, the extent of which vary based on state constitutions and statutes.

Many public health measures specific to COVID-19 are best implemented at the state and local level because every locale is different and individual jurisdictions have the authority and local awareness to protect their communities. CDC continues to provide guidance, recommendations, information, and expertise to inform local decisions and support the states as needed (see searchable database for guidance documents here: www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/communication/guidance-list.html). CDC remains committed to working with communities across the U.S. to closely monitor the impacts of this pandemic, contain the spread where possible, and adjust mitigation strategies to fit local conditions and circumstances. CDC will continue to evaluate its use of existing legal authorities as the pandemic situation evolves and adjust our response and guidance as conditions change and as we learn more about this emerging infectious disease.

Please regularly visit our COVID-19 website (www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/index.html) for CDC's latest and most up-to-date information, resources, and guidance. During this public health emergency and global pandemic, HHS and its federal partners are providing regular congressional and press briefings to keep policymakers and the public up to date on evolving developments. We hope that you and your staff take advantage of these opportunities to get answers to your most pressing questions. Please contact Jane Bigham in our CDC Washington Office at (202) 245-0600 or Jbigham@cdc.gov if you have further questions.

Thank you, again, for the work you do to protect the American people and for your interest in this ongoing response. We appreciate your support, and that of Congress, as we all work together

to fight COVID-19. CDC remains committed to protecting the American public in the face of this pandemic.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Robert R. Redfield MD". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Robert R. Redfield, MD
Director, CDC