

United States Senate

April 2, 2020

Christi A. Grimm
Principal Deputy Inspector General
Office of Inspector General
U.S. Department of Health and Human Services
330 Independence Avenue, SW
Washington, DC 20201

Dear Principal Deputy Inspector General Grimm,

I am writing to request an immediate investigation into the mismanagement being reported regarding the Strategic National Stockpile's (SNS) supply of ventilators. Troubling reports indicate that potential contracting delays and maintenance failures are contributing to a low supply of operational ventilators during the novel coronavirus (COVID-19) global pandemic at a time when our country desperately needs them.

The Pandemic and All-Hazards Preparedness Act (PAHPA), which manages and provides tools for the nation's public health response capabilities, first enacted in 2006 and last reauthorized by Congress in June 2019, includes clear expectations to ensure that the Department of Health and Human Services' SNS procurement and maintenance decisions support the federal government's ability to support states and localities in a public health emergency. On January 31, 2020, Secretary Alex Azar of the Department of Health and Human Services declared a national public health emergency.

These reports, if true, are unacceptable and I am writing to urge the immediate investigation into the below questions, as well as any additional queries that the Office of the Inspector General (OIG) determines would reform and improve our nation's public health preparedness:

- Was there a gap between contracts that led to a lapse in maintaining the ventilators in the SNS?
 - If so, how long did the ventilators go without maintenance compared to industry standards?
 - Are there regulatory or statutory changes that need to occur to prevent this from happening in the future?
- Was there mismanagement that led to a shortage of working ventilators or other critical medical supplies or equipment?

The SNS is a critical resource for states facing grave public health emergencies, and we must take every step to make sure that there is a robust supply of working medical supplies and equipment on hand. I appreciate the OIG's expedited consideration of this matter and request an update on the investigation as soon as possible.

Sincerely,



Cory Gardner
United States Senator