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ONE HUNDRED FIFTEENTH CONGRESS
Congress of the United States
House of Representatives

COMMITTEE ON ENERGY AND COMMERCE

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November 9, 2017

Rear Admiral Stephen C. Redd, MD
Director
Office of Public Health Preparedness and Response
Centers for Disease Control and Prevention
1600 Clifton Road
Atlanta, GA 30329

Dear Admiral Redd:

Thank you for appearing before the Subcommittee on Oversight and Investigations on Tuesday, October 24, 2017, to testify at the hearing entitled "Examining HHS's Public Health Preparedness for and Response to the 2017 Hurricane Season."

Pursuant to the Rules of the Committee on Energy and Commerce, the hearing record remains open for ten business days to permit Members to submit additional questions for the record, which are attached. The format of your responses to these questions should be as follows: (1) the name of the Member whose question you are addressing, (2) the complete text of the question you are addressing in bold, and (3) your answer to that question in plain text.

To facilitate the printing of the hearing record, please respond to these questions with a transmittal letter by the close of business on Tuesday, November 28, 2017. Your responses should be mailed to Ali Fulling, Legislative Clerk, Committee on Energy and Commerce, 2125 Rayburn House Office Building, Washington, DC 20515 and e-mailed in Word format to Ali.Fulling@mail.house.gov.

Thank you again for your time and effort preparing and delivering testimony before the Subcommittee.

Sincerely,



Greg Walden
Chairman

cc: The Honorable Diana DeGette, Ranking Member, Subcommittee on Oversight and Investigations

Attachment

Attachment—Additional Questions for the Record

The Honorable Greg Walden

1. According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's (CDC) testimony on October 24, 2017, laboratories in Puerto Rico are not able to conduct any public health tests because of damage sustained during Hurricane Maria. As a result, the CDC is lending support and arranging clinical specimens for suspected priority infectious diseases—such as tuberculosis, leptospirosis, rabies, influenza, and salmonella—to be sent to the U.S. mainland for testing. To date, how many specimens has CDC sent to the U.S. mainland for testing?
 - a. Approximately how long does it take for CDC to receive a diagnostic result for the samples it sends to be tested on the U.S. mainland?
 - b. What, if any, infectious diseases have been detected through the testing of these specimens?
 - c. Do the laboratories in Puerto Rico have generator power yet? If not, when does CDC expect the laboratories in Puerto Rico to be at least partially functional?
 - d. Has CDC assessed what, if any, equipment from the laboratories can be salvaged?
2. What disease risks have been detected by CDC's National Syndromic Surveillance Program in the affected regions?
3. During the Agency's hurricane response efforts, has CDC identified any scarcities of medical supplies, such as vaccines, that could hinder the public health response efforts? If so, could you please elaborate?

The Honorable Gus Bilirakis

1. Can you discuss public health surveillance post-storm?
 - a. What public health and health care delivery challenges still exist?
 - b. Have previous public health hazards (like Zika) been heightened? If so, how do we proactively address during our recovery process?

The Honorable Frank Pallone, Jr.

1. There have been 51 deaths officially associated by Hurricane Maria, as reported by the Puerto Rico government. The Center for Disease Control has confirmed three deaths due to leptospirosis. To date, the island has reported 76 possible cases of the disease. What is the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) doing to prepare for the potential onslaught of disease caused by contaminated drinking water and the spread of leptospirosis?

2. What are HHS, CDC, and other involved federal agencies doing to ensure local Puerto Rico government employees have the necessary health and safety equipment to protect themselves during their ongoing relief and recovery work? a. Which federal government agencies are responsible for providing needed Personal Protective Equipment (PPEs) to relief and recovery workers?
3. What precautionary measures and/or infrastructure is currently in place to treat potential disease outbreaks in geographically remote areas?
4. What percentage of the population of Puerto Rico and the U.S. Virgin Islands currently has access to potable water through their tap? Is the CDC certain that, where water service has been restored, that the water is safe to drink?

The Honorable Jan Schakowsky

1. Following up, in the aftermath of disasters like these devastating Hurricanes, government should provide relief and recovery workers with required health and safety protections and Personal Protective Equipment (PPEs) to ensure workers' health is not compromised during current and ongoing clean-up and future rebuilding. Unfortunately, we have heard that this is causing problems in Puerto Rico.

We know Puerto Ricans in both the private and public sector want to do the work needed to help rebuild their lives, homes, communities, and their Commonwealth. Government workers are willing and eager to help address short-term needs –even when working as assigned by the Puerto Rico government is outside their long-standing employee responsibilities and expertise. Nonetheless, workers simultaneously want to protect their own health and safety and avoid unnecessary health problems. The long-term medical problems flowing from the tragic events on September 11, 2001 and the resulting cleanup efforts at Ground Zero and on the Pile taught us the vital importance of providing appropriate health and safety equipment and training to workers in conditions that are dangerous or uncertain.

- a. What is HHS, CDC, and other federal agencies doing to ensure local Puerto Rico government employees have the necessary health and safety equipment to protect themselves during their ongoing relief and recovery work?
- b. Have these issues been addressed in Puerto Rico?
- c. Which federal government agencies are responsible for providing needed PPEs to recovery workers?

The Honorable Kathy Castor

1. I also heard from these health professionals that water sanitation is one of the biggest issues in Puerto Rico right now, which is leading to gastrointestinal issues as well as systemic infections. How is the Administration helping get clean water to Puerto Rico, especially to remote areas? Additionally, how is HHS working with health professionals on the ground to treat illnesses stemming from the lack of clean water?

2. Physicians have told me they are seeing other health issues such as asthma, COPD, conjunctivitis, scabies, diabetes, and hypertension being exacerbated due to lack of medications, power, transportation and supplies, increased air pollution from generators and unsanitary living conditions. Is HHS monitoring this situation, and what steps are being taken to address these additional health issues?

The Honorable Pete Olson

1. After tackling 3 Hurricanes in a short period of time, what strains have you seen on your current resources. Also, what additional resources do you need to provide these communities the help that they need?