



## OFFICE OF INSPECTOR GENERAL

Department of Homeland Security

Washington, DC 20528 / [www.oig.dhs.gov](http://www.oig.dhs.gov)

June 10, 2020

The Honorable Elizabeth Warren  
United States Senate  
309 Hart Senate Office Building  
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Senator Warren:

Thank you for your April 21, 2020 letter requesting that we and the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) Office of Inspector General (OIG) investigate the management and distribution of medical supplies by the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) and HHS in response to the 2019 novel coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic. You and your colleagues have expressed concern that the distribution of medical supplies, including personal protective equipment (PPE) and ventilators, lacked transparency and failed to provide supplies timely to states and people in need.

Our office is planning three audits that we believe will address many of your concerns. The first is an audit of FEMA's support and coordination of federal response efforts to the COVID-19 pandemic. This review will determine how effectively FEMA supported and coordinated federal response efforts for distribution of PPE and ventilators in response to the COVID-19 pandemic. The audit will also review FEMA's decision-making for distribution of the PPE and ventilators before and up to 30 days after the President's emergency declaration pursuant to the Stafford Act. This audit will identify what support FEMA provided HHS in decision-making for the distribution of PPE and ventilators prior to the emergency declaration, and how FEMA coordinated with federal, state, local and tribal partners for 30 days after the emergency declaration and being named lead of the COVID-19 federal response. We will also identify stakeholders FEMA relied upon for decision-making and coordination of PPE and ventilators during the scope of the audit.

The second planned audit is a review of FEMA's COVID-19 medical supply chain, and will determine to what extent FEMA managed and distributed medical supplies and equipment in response to the COVID-19 pandemic.



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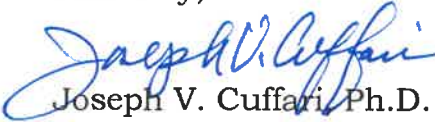
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A third planned audit, which will be a follow-on to our second audit, will evaluate FEMA's review and approval process for state medical supply and equipment requests, and will determine the extent to which FEMA managed the receipt and approval of state medical supply and equipment requests. Together, the second and third audits should show the entire supply chain process from the request through final distribution.

We have been in close contact with our peers at HHS OIG to discuss the specifics of our work and will be coordinating our audit efforts with their office where necessary.

We have provided an identical response to all signatories of the request. Should you have any questions, please contact me, or your staff may contact Erica Paulson, Assistant Inspector General for External Affairs, at (202) 981-6000.

Sincerely,

  
Joseph V. Cuffari, Ph.D.  
Inspector General

cc: Principal Deputy Inspector General Christi Grimm  
HHS Office of Inspector General