

National Headquarters
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August 31, 2018

Robert Kadlec, MD
Assistant Secretary for Preparedness and Response
US Department of Health and Human Services
200 Independence Avenue, SW, Room 638-G
Washington, DC 20201

Dear Dr. Kadlec,

On behalf of my colleagues, I want to thank you and your team for meeting with ASTHO leadership in late June. We found it extremely informative and beneficial and look forward to future opportunities to have scheduled and ad-hoc leader-to-leader exchanges on matters of mutual interest regarding emergency preparedness, response, and recovery.

As a follow-up to our conversation below please find some additional insights and inputs regarding the SNS transfer, repatriation planning, and health care system readiness.

SNS Transfer

As promised, attached you will find a summary of our recommendations for your consideration which represents a synthesis of thoughts generated by members of ASTHO's Preparedness Policy, Directors of Public Health Preparedness Peer Group, and Medical Countermeasures Work Group. It covers the four key areas of 1) Program Administration, 2) Workforce, 3) Sustainment, and 4) Evaluation. We hope you find this helpful as you work to ensure a seamless transition and overall operational improvement of SNS readiness, including the challenges associated with the "Last Mile."

While not raised in the attached, ASTHO also wants to mention our concern over the potential financial impact of this transfer on CDC operations. It is our understanding that CDC programs rely on approximately \$24M of the annual SNS budget line to support other intra and extra mural program activities integral to SNS capacity and capability, of which state and territorial health departments benefit from. We would not want to see this transfer result in a reduction of federal, direct, and/or technical assistance to our members and would be very interested in hearing your thoughts on this matter and your intentions to ensure this transfer does not result in cuts or reductions for public health and preparedness activities as you move forward.

Repatriation Planning

We are grateful to Joe Lamana for providing an excellent briefing on this initiative to our members during one of their regularly scheduled biweekly calls on August 10. Shortly after the call we shared with our members, as provided to us by Joe, the final draft of the U.S. [National Emergency Repatriation Base Plan](#) and the [State Emergency Repatriation Plan \(SERPs\) Review Checklist](#), with encouragement for them to connect with their jurisdiction's designated SERP point of contact, as well as engage and contribute to this important multi-agency and multi-disciplinary effort.

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Healthcare System Readiness:

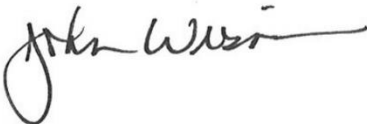
Time did not permit us to discuss this important topic in much detail. We do look forward to future opportunities to do so, such as during ASTHO's Annual meeting next month where we will be meeting with Dr. Yeskey during the Leader to Leader Roundtable and the Policy Summit (Preparedness Policy Committee Meeting), your second annual stakeholders' listening session on September 18, and the Directors of Public Health Preparedness Annual Meeting in mid-October. Some of the areas we would like to explore with you and your office would include:

- The vision for integrating, aligning, and sustaining the various existing and planned components such as HPP Coalitions, the NETEC and the regional Ebola and special pathogen treatment facilities, and the demonstration project for Regional Disaster Health Response Systems.
- Regarding the Regional Systems Demonstration Project Funding Opportunity, ways by which the non-clinical aspects of the objectives and associated activities for the formed "partnerships" to sync up and not collide with the standing roles and responsibilities of state and local government functions such as state plan alignment, legal and policy coordination and alignment, statewide situational awareness, etc.
- Current thinking on changing the paradigm for funding healthcare systems readiness (e.g. bypassing the states and awarding directly to Health care Coalitions, regional systems, Ebola treatment facilities, etc.).

Again, thank you very much for your leadership and collaboration. ASTHO is equally committed to working with you as your partner in support of sound policy, strategy, and tactics for the health security of our nation.

Please do not hesitate to contact me or Jim Blumenstock, Chief of Health Security, at jblumenstock@astho.org for input and assistance.

Sincerely,



John Wiesman, DrPH, MPH
ASTHO President, Secretary of Health
Washington State Department of Health
Olympia, WA

Attachment

cc: Nicole Alexander-Scott, MD, MPH
Michael Fraser, PhD, MS, CAE, FCPP
Jim Blumenstock
Carolyn Mullen
Gerrit Bakker