

# United States Senate

September 6, 2022

Dr. Rochelle P. Walensky  
Director  
Centers for Disease Control and Prevention  
1600 Clifton Road  
Atlanta, GA 30329

Dear Dr. Walensky:

We applaud your efforts to review the performance of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) during the COVID-19 pandemic and institute reforms to better prepare it for future public health threats. As part of this effort, we recommend building federal laboratory capabilities on the West Coast in order to improve the agency's readiness to diagnose rare or novel diseases and more swiftly respond to public health threats.

We saw early in the COVID-19 pandemic that CDC's reliance on one reference laboratory in Atlanta, Georgia, limited the agency's capacity and agility. For example, after the first CDC COVID-19 test kits were found to be faulty, all patient samples had to be sent to Atlanta for testing. The substantial delays in getting test results back to states could have been mitigated if the agency had additional capabilities on the West Coast, providing more time for health measures to be put in place to slow COVID-19's spread.

As you know, research published in the *Proceedings of National Academy of Sciences* estimates that the likelihood of another global pandemic during our children's lifetime is high and the risk of occurrence is likely to increase three-fold in the next few decades. Climate change is also increasing the risk of emerging infectious diseases that threaten human health and livelihood.

We strongly support your efforts to strengthen the agency's capacity to detect and respond to rare and emerging diseases before new pandemics emerge. Establishing a federal laboratory presence on the West Coast will be a significant improvement to CDC's current capability.

Thank you for your consideration of this priority, and we look forward to continue working with you on this pressing issue.

Sincerely,



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Dianne Feinstein  
United States Senator



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Alex Padilla  
United States Senator