



March 9, 2020

**VIA E-MAIL AND FIRST CLASS MAIL**

The Honorable Alexander M. Azar II  
Secretary  
U.S. Department of Health and Human Services  
200 Independence Avenue, SW  
Washington, D.C. 20201

Dear Secretary Azar:

I am writing in follow-up to my February 21, 2020 letter raising concerns from NTEU bargaining unit employees throughout HHS, including in FDA, about the novel coronavirus. In that letter, I asked which HHS employees are at risk of being exposed to the coronavirus in the course of their work and what steps HHS is taking to protect employees. We have learned that HHS has halted most international travel, but we have also heard that some international trips are being left to the discretion of the individual traveler. Please verify that this is the case, and further, assure NTEU that there will be no negative repercussions for employees who choose not to travel.

NTEU hereby requests all policies or guidance concerning telework and work schedules in communities affected by the coronavirus. Anecdotally, it seems that local managers are encouraging employees to telework when possible and are allowing flexible schedules and unscheduled leave when employees are affected by coronavirus in their communities (for example, when schools close). NTEU strongly encourages HHS to formally adopt these policies nation-wide. In addition, please verify that employees are being told to self-quarantine and to telework for 14 days after they return from travel, whether that travel is personal or official. If employees are indeed encouraged to self-quarantine, please also inform NTEU of plans to ensure that employees who take on additional caseloads while their colleagues are quarantined (for example, those who work in laboratories) are not negatively affected by increased workloads.

HHS employees have valid concerns about their health and safety in the face of this virus. If HHS would prefer to answer these questions through a briefing, please contact Ken Moffett, [ken.moffet@nteu.org](mailto:ken.moffet@nteu.org), and Kate Sylvester, [kate.sylvester@nteu.org](mailto:kate.sylvester@nteu.org). However, NTEU's priority is to communicate with bargaining unit employees as soon as possible, so a written response would also be welcome. Thank you for responding promptly so NTEU can alleviate the understandable concerns of employees.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Anthony M. Reardon".

Anthony M. Reardon  
National President