

United States Senate

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June 4, 2026

The Honorable Dr. Jay Bhattacharya
Acting Director
Centers for Disease Control and Prevention
1600 Clifton Road NE
Atlanta, GA 30329

Mr. John Knox
Principal Deputy Assistant Secretary for Preparedness and Response
Administration for Strategic Preparedness and Response
200 Independence Avenue SW
Washington, DC 20201

Dear Acting Director Bhattacharya and Principal Deputy Assistant Secretary Knox,

As New York and many other states prepare to welcome millions of international visitors in the coming weeks during the 2026 FIFA World Cup, it is essential that the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and the Administration for Strategic Preparedness and Response (ASPR) are equipped to identify and respond to emerging infectious disease outbreaks through strong surveillance and coordination with domestic and international partners. As the world continues to confront deadly outbreaks of hantavirus and Ebola, Americans are once again reminded how quickly infectious disease threats can escalate in our interconnected global community, with lessons from the COVID-19 pandemic underscoring that delayed coordination, inconsistent communication, and inadequate preparedness can carry devastating human and economic consequences.

While I recognize current assessments indicate the risk of widespread transmission of Ebola and hantavirus within the United States remains low, the scale of international travel associated with the World Cup presents unique public health challenges that warrant substantial coordination. Infectious diseases do not respect borders, and with millions of people expected to attend the World Cup, we must be proactive to safeguard our nation's public health. Millions of travelers will move through international airports, public transit systems, hotels, stadiums, and other high-density settings across the U.S. Engagement with local, state, and national partners, in addition to international bodies like the World Health Organization (WHO) is crucial to identifying and understanding threats, as well as monitoring and responding to potential outbreaks.

As a major international hub and host city of the 2026 FIFA World Cup, New York State has a particular interest in ensuring the United States is fully prepared to respond to evolving infectious disease threats before they reach our communities. I urge CDC and ASPR to provide timely and transparent updates to the public, providers, and Congress regarding hantavirus and Ebola response efforts and respectfully request information regarding the following:

1. How are CDC and ASPR coordinating with international partners, including the Mexican and Canadian governments, to monitor outbreaks and share relevant public health advice ahead of the 2026 FIFA World Cup?
2. How are CDC and ASPR coordinating with local and state public health officials regarding infectious disease preparedness in advance of the 2026 FIFA World Cup?
3. Have CDC or ASPR conducted risk assessments regarding the potential impact of increased international travel associated with the World Cup on infectious disease surveillance and response capacity within the United States?
 - a. If so, what did the risk assessment demonstrate?
 - b. If not, why have CDC and/or ASPR conducted risk assessments?
4. What guidance has been or will be provided to hospitals, healthcare systems, urgent care centers, and frontline healthcare providers regarding the identification, testing, isolation, and treatment of suspected hantavirus or Ebola cases?
 - a. What guidance has been provided for other infectious diseases, such as Middle East Respiratory Syndrome (MERS)?
5. What guidance has been or will be provided to travel hubs, including international airports and transit centers, regarding the identification, testing, isolation, and treatment of suspected hantavirus or Ebola cases?
6. How are shortages of public health professionals, infectious diseases physicians, and other healthcare personnel impacting our readiness for potential outbreaks associated with World Cup?
7. What countermeasures are currently available or being developed to prevent and treat hantavirus or Ebola?
 - a. What role is ASPR playing in supporting those efforts?
 - b. What efforts are underway to support the research and development of medical countermeasures? Do you anticipate that access to any products will be available during the World Cup?
8. What additional authorities or resources do CDC and ASPR need to strengthen local, state, and federal preparedness for possible infectious disease outbreaks during the World Cup?

9. What public communication and outreach plans do CDC and ASPR have in place for the World Cup, including strategies to inform individuals on how to protect themselves from communicable diseases?
 - a. What guidance is in place to assist international attendees who may be unfamiliar with the U.S. healthcare system or lack English proficiency?
10. In addition to Ebola and hantavirus, what other infectious diseases do you believe pose the greatest risks for outbreaks during World Cup, and what steps are CDC and ASPR taking to protect the well-being of Americans and foreign visitors?

I appreciate your continued efforts to protect public health and strengthen our nation's preparedness for emerging infectious disease threats. I look forward to your prompt response.

Sincerely,



Kirsten Gillibrand
United States Senator