

**Congress of the United States**  
Washington, DC 20510

January 7, 2015

The Honorable Sylvia Mathews Burwell  
Secretary of Health and Human Services  
U.S. Department of Health and Human Services  
200 Independence Avenue, S.W.  
Washington, D.C. 20201

Dear Secretary Burwell:

We write to respectfully request the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) expeditiously distribute the Ebola response and preparedness funds that were included in the Consolidated and Further Continuing Appropriations Act of 2015. Specifically, we urge HHS to ensure adequate funding flows directly to U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention-designated Ebola Treatment Centers.

Additionally, because response and preparation needs vary widely state to state, we urge HHS to allow additional funds to state agencies to be as flexible as possible to allow states to allocate money where it is needed most.

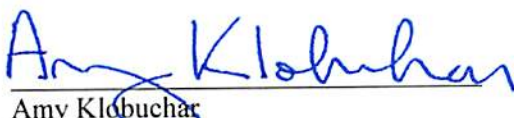
As Ebola emerged as a public health threat last year, Minnesota was quick to react. Minnesota state agencies, hospitals, and other stakeholders worked to ensure the state was properly prepared to respond to an Ebola patient.

Key to preparedness efforts was the designation of four Minnesota hospitals, which were later identified by the CDC as Ebola Treatment Centers. These hospitals incurred significant costs in preparing, which included modification of physical facilities, purchase of specialized equipment and personal protective equipment, and extensive staff training.

At the end of November, the costs to hospitals housing Minnesota's four designated Ebola Treatment Centers ranged from \$720,800 to \$875,000 each. In addition, all Minnesota hospitals have already incurred costs related to Ebola preparedness and will need additional resources to maintain their readiness. Further, costs would quickly escalate if a Minnesota hospital cares for an Ebola patient. The University of Nebraska Medical Center reported that caring for the first two Ebola patients cost \$1.16 million.

The Consolidated and Further Continuing Appropriations Act of 2015 requires that HHS issue within 30 days a spending plan for the Ebola response and preparedness funds. As HHS develops this plan, we ask that you consider how this time-sensitive funding can efficiently reach hospitals and public health officials to ensure continued preparedness and care for the communities they serve. Thank you for considering this request.

Sincerely,

  
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Amy Klobuchar  
United States Senator

  
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Congresswoman Betty McCollum  
Member of Congress