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Coronavirus Emergency Supplemental Passes Senate

WASHINGTON, D.C. – A new strain of coronavirus, designated as COVID-19, emerged in China in December and has spread around the globe. The virus, which causes respiratory illness, has now been detected in nearly 70 countries, including the United States. In an effort to better prevent, prepare for, and respond to COVID-19, the Senate today passed an emergency supplemental funding package totaling $8.3 billion. U.S. Senators Lisa Murkowski (R-AK) and Dan Sullivan (R-AK) voted in favor of the Coronavirus Preparedness & Response Supplemental Appropriations Act, H.R. 6074, which aims to strengthen the federal response to the coronavirus outbreak and allow for necessary precautions, prevention, and treatment at the local, state, national, and international levels. The funding package provides additional funding for states, tribes, tribal organizations, and territories. The vehicle now heads to the President’s desk to be signed into law.

“This emergency supplemental ensures we are doing everything we can to prevent and to continue to respond to this outbreak. By directing additional funds towards medical supplies, research & development of vaccines, treatment, and more, we are providing much-needed support for healthcare experts at all levels to properly respond to this public health emergency,” said Senator Murkowski. “As we navigate the unique circumstances of this outbreak, we are also taking commonsense steps to avoid unnecessary lapses in care, including a provision that waives certain telehealth requirements to avoid placing Medicare beneficiaries at greater risk to ensure they can receive the care they need at home. The support that we are able to provide to each state, including Alaska, will help bolster local preparedness, protecting the health and safety of Americans.”

“Today I joined my Senate colleagues in taking an important step to strengthen federal, state and local government’s response and preparedness to the COVID-19 novel coronavirus, dedicating billions to the nationwide effort,” said Senator Sullivan. “These funds will be used to bolster response and prevention efforts, including deploying resources for patient monitoring, lab testing, acquisition of test kits, securing protective equipment, and conducting research, development, and acquisition of a vaccine. Importantly, this bipartisan package will allocate money to state, local and tribal health providers—including our many community health centers. We know that these are the health professionals on the front lines working every day to respond to this illness and keep Alaskans safe.”

The emergency supplemental provides $6.49 billion for the Health and Human Services Department (including $2.2 billion for the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention), $61 million for the Food and Drug Administration, $1.3 billion for the State Department, and $20 million for the Small Business Administration. Nearly $950 million is allocated to support state and local health agencies prepare for and respond to COVID-19 outbreaks in the United States. The funding package also allows Medicare providers to provide telehealth medical services to patients who are at their homes.
Resources:

- Alaska DHSS: COVID-19 Situation Overview
- CDC: Situation Summary
- CDC: “What you should know”
- CDC: “Spread facts stop fear”
- CDC Guidance:
  - Schools
  - Businesses
  - Pregnant Women and Children
- CDC: Travel
- State Department: Travel

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