April 13, 2022

The Honorable Alejandro Mayorkas
Secretary
Office of the Secretary
U.S. Department of Homeland Security
Washington, D.C. 20528

Dear Secretary Mayorkas:

We write to you regarding the Biden Administration’s continued mishandling of the migrant crisis occurring on the United States’ southern border with Mexico. A recent news report suggested that the Biden Administration, through the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) and Department of Veterans Affairs (VA), is considering a disturbing new policy initiative that would send VA medical professionals to the southern border. We write to learn more about this policy proposal and the current status of the southern border.

As you know, in March 2020, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) issued an order under its Title 42 authority that allows U.S. Customs and Border Protection (CBP) to immediately turn away migrants at the border who may spread communicable diseases. Unfortunately, the Biden Administration recently announced that this authority will expire in May 2022.

On March 29, 2022, a CBP report indicated a surge of border crossings was imminent due to the rescinding of this authority. The report presents a dire situation that may result in as many as 18,000 possible encounters per day. If this number proves accurate, this could result in over 540,000 encounters in a single month.¹ The previous highest record of monthly encounters was 220,063 in March 2000.²

Currently, CBP does not have the facilities or manpower to handle the anticipated massive surge. On March 31, a CBP source told a reporter, "If half a million people come in one month –that’s an emergency. There is no way we have enough federal agents and NGOs, and NGAs. There’s not enough people going around." The source says that one of the ideas was to send VA medical professionals to the border to aid in examining migrants at detention centers. If this proposal is truly being considered, this is deeply troubling.

Moving VA medical staff away from our veterans’ healthcare needs to examine illegal immigrants is a recipe for disaster. Wait times for a veteran to see their doctor can average 22 days and reach as high as 42 days. This is unacceptable mismanagement of federal government resources by the Biden administration.

We request answers on the following:

1. Is there a plan to send medical personnel from the Department of Veterans Affairs to the southern border?

2. We request all documents and communications between officials at the Department of Homeland Security, the Department of Veterans Affairs, and/or the White House pertaining to the possible deployment of VA medical professionals to the southern border.

We look forward to your Department’s response. Please provide this information and all documents no later than April 27, 2022.

Sincerely,

Jody Hice (GA-10)
Member of Congress

---

3 Hillary Vaughn, (Mar, 31 2022) https://twitter.com/hillary__vaughn/status/1509530954569682951?s=20&t=JYpcsZpyRNw6O0vklA-bNg

4 https://www.accesstocare.va.gov/PWT/FindFacilities?LocationText=30233&ApptType=12&PatientType=1&SameDayServiceView=False&SortOrder=0&Radius=50&UserLatitude=-1&UserLongitude=-1&SameDayServiceView=false
Rick W. Allen (GA-12)  
Member of Congress

Andy Biggs (AZ-05)  
Member of Congress

Stephanie Bice (OK-05)  
Member of Congress

Mo Brooks (AL-05)  
Member of Congress

Kat Cammack (FL-03)  
Member of Congress

Earl L. "Buddy" Carter (GA-01)  
Member of Congress

Andrew S. Clyde (GA-09)  
Member of Congress

Dan Crenshaw (TX-02)  
Member of Congress

Brian Babin, D.D.S. (TX-36)  
Member of Congress

Dan Bishop (NC-09)  
Member of Congress

Ted Budd (NC-13)  
Member of Congress

Mike Carey (OH-15)  
Member of Congress

Ben Cline (VA-06)  
Member of Congress

Eric A. "Rick" Crawford (AR-01)  
Member of Congress

Warren Davidson (OH-08)  
Member of Congress

Scott DesJarlais, M.D. (TN-04)  
Member of Congress
Jeff Duncan (SC-03)
Member of Congress

Brian Fitzpatrick (PA-01)
Member of Congress

Bob Good (VA-05)
Member of Congress

Glenn Grothman (WI-06)
Member of Congress

Kevin Hern (OK-01)
Member of Congress

Ashley Hinson (IA-01)
Member of Congress

Richard Hudson (NC-08)
Member of Congress

Byron Donalds (FL-19)
Member of Congress

A. Drew Ferguson IV
Member of Congress

Louie Gohmert (TX-01)
Member of Congress

Mark E. Green, M.D. (TN-07)
Member of Congress

Diana Harshbarger (TN-01)
Member of Congress

Clay Higgins (LA-03)
Member of Congress

Doug Lamborn (CO-05)
Member of Congress
Lauren Boebert (CO-03)
Member of Congress

Debbie Lesko (AZ-05)
Member of Congress

Brian Mast (FL-18)
Member of Congress

John R. Moolenaar (MI-04)
Member of Congress

Gregory F. Murphy, M.D. (NC-03)
Member of Congress

Jay Obernolte (CA-08)
Member of Congress

Scott Perry (PA-10)
Member of Congress

Jake LaTurner (KS-02)
Member of Congress

Nicole Malliotakis (NY-11)
Member of Congress

Mary E. Miller (IL-15)
Member of Congress

Barry Moore (AL-02)
Member of Congress

Ralph Norman (SC-05)
Member of Congress

Steven M. Palazzo (MS-04)
Member of Congress

Bill Posey (FL-08)
Member of Congress
Guy Reschenthaler (PA-14)
Member of Congress

John H. Rutherford (FL-04)
Member of Congress

W. Gregory Steube (FL-17)
Member of Congress

Tom Tiffany (WI-07)
Member of Congress

Randy K. Weber (TX-14)
Member of Congress

Chip Roy (TX-21)
Member of Congress

Elise M. Stefanik (NY-21)
Member of Congress

Claudia Tenney (NY-22)
Member of Congress

Jefferson Van Drew (NJ-02)
Member of Congress

CC: Secretary of Veteran Affairs