

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

January 28, 2015

The Honorable Sylvia Burwell
Secretary
U.S. Department of Health & Human Services
200 Independence Avenue, S.W.
Washington, DC 20201

Dear Secretary Burwell:

As you know, the University of Nebraska Medical Center (UNMC) is playing a major role in both the treatment of Ebola patients and the training of medical personnel for future work in treatment centers. The UNMC Biocontainment Unit, as part of the National Center for Health Security and Biomedical Preparedness, has been nationally recognized for its expertise and ability to rapidly respond to this global crisis. UNMC was one of the few institutions in the nation that was ready when called upon to treat Ebola patients. I am proud of the excellent care UNMC has provided to these patients and commend their ongoing training efforts to ensure that our nation is prepared in the event of a future Ebola outbreak.

UNMC has proven itself as a national asset in the fight against Ebola and other highly infectious diseases. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) has worked with UNMC and Emory University Hospital to develop a curriculum for national health care system training. UNMC has already delivered on-site training for hundreds of health care professionals across the country. What's more, UNMC has scheduled training for more than 30 additional institutions that have requested to come to Nebraska for training.

Despite these ongoing efforts, there are still questions about how the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) will provide financial support to help UNMC continue its training program. I urge you to use the resources allocated by Congress to immediately fund the expansion of the educational resources and the existing Biocontainment Unit at UNMC. I also encourage HHS to formalize an agreement with UNMC to develop and implement a long-term national training strategy, and to play a major role in the continued treatment of patients.

I look forward to a detailed account of how HHS is supporting the National Center for Health Security and Biomedical Preparedness and improving our nation's preparedness for the threat posed by Ebola and other highly infectious diseases.

Sincerely,



Deb Fischer
United States Senator

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