



Duckworth Speaks with Health Providers across Illinois to Discuss COVID-19 Response

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– U.S. Senator Tammy Duckworth (D-IL) spoke with health providers based in Illinois this week about the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic. During these discussions, Duckworth discussed the bipartisan COVID-19 relief compromise, checked in about each stakeholder's response to the pandemic and asked what additional federal resources are needed so they can continue supporting their employees, members and the community throughout this public health crisis.

Senator Duckworth spoke with the following health leaders:

- **Chris Manson (Vice President, OSF HealthCare, Peoria):** Duckworth and Manson's conversation centered around bed capacity preparations and OSF's pandemic worker response program.
- **Rex Budde (President & CEO, Southern Illinois Healthcare, Carbondale):** Duckworth and Budde discussed the support the bipartisan COVID-19 relief compromise will allocate to hospitals.
- **Ed Curtis (President & CEO, Memorial Healthcare System, Springfield):** Duckworth and Manson discussed testing abilities and PPE supplies, as well as funding from the bipartisan COVID-10 relief compromise.
- **Debra Carey (Interim CEO, Cook County Health, Chicago):** Duckworth and Carey spoke about the urgent need for more PPE and rapid testing in jails, prisons and detention centers because the virus can spread so quickly (similar to nursing facilities).
- **Dr. Omar Lateef (CEO & President, Rush University Medical Center, Chicago):** Duckworth and Lateef discussed the Center's preparations for a surge in patients.
- **Larry McCully (President & CEO, SIHF Healthcare, Metro East):** Duckworth and McCully discussed the critical need for PPE and expanded testing.

Since the COVID-19 public health crisis began, Senator Duckworth has led with a wide range of actions to support middle-class working Americans and help our nation better respond to the pandemic, [including supporting the *Families First Coronavirus Response Act*](#) that's now law forcing the Trump Administration to refocus its efforts on testing and access to tests. She also [voted in favor of the *Coronavirus Aid Relief and Economic Security \(CARES\) Act*](#), which makes important progress to help Americans address and recover from the COVID-19 pandemic. Duckworth was one of the first Senators to [urge](#) the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) to immediately establish clear diagnostic testing procedures, capabilities and production capacity to better mitigate the spread of COVID-19. After [calling on the President to swiftly take action under the *Defense Production Act \(DPA\)* to boost production of live-saving ventilators](#) and other equipment needed to limit the spread of COVID-19, Duckworth helped [introduce new legislation](#) to require him to do so to help save lives. [She also introduced](#) the *COVID-19 Health Care Worker Protection Act* to help keep frontline healthcare workers safe, cosponsored the *Free COVID-19 Testing Act* to expand access to free tests [helped introduce](#) the comprehensive *COVID-19 RELIEF for Small Businesses Act of 2020* to support small businesses across the country and give them the resources they need to weather this crisis and she helped introduce legislation that [was signed into law](#) to make sure student Veterans and their loved ones receiving benefits through the GI Bill don't lose them as universities move online. Duckworth also [joined her colleagues](#) on the *PAID (Providing Americans Insured Days) Leave Act* to ensure workers can take time off when ill and [helped introduce](#) the *Small Business Debt Relief Act of 2020* to support small businesses affected by the pandemic by relieving certain federal loan payments.

After hundreds of passengers were forced into close quarters for hours to clear federal medical screenings at customs at O'Hare International Airport, Duckworth [joined U.S. Senator Dick Durbin \(D-IL\) in demanding](#) additional federal resources. She [called on Donald Trump to do more to bring back Illinoisans](#) and other Americans stranded abroad as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic. She [also called](#) on U.S. Department of Defense (DOD) and the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) to work together to ensure civilian healthcare workers are well-trained to use military-issued respirator masks and other personal protective equipment that DOD has made available to civilian healthcare providers. [Duckworth spoke out](#) about Republican attempts to deny funding to healthcare providers that receive Medicaid, thereby making it harder for vulnerable groups—including people with disabilities, older Americans and survivors of rape and abuse—to access critical services they rely on, like home care assistance or meal delivery programs. Along with Senator Durbin, [she sent a letter](#) to the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) calling on the agency to grant the State of Illinois flexibility to expand access to health services and have the flexibility to deliver quality care amid this public health crisis, [which CMS ultimately granted](#). Duckworth [joined a bipartisan group](#) of Senators urging the Trump Administration expand access to

telehealth services to rural communities and she [pressed](#) the CDC for information on a potential shortage of enzymes needed for CDC coronavirus test kits. The Senator is [also seeking information](#) from Secretary of Defense Mark Esper about any proactive steps the Department of Defense is taking to ensure the readiness of National Guard and Reserve units to support local civilian authorities as the pandemic spreads.