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Congress of the United States
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Washington, DC 20515

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July 7, 2014

Thomas R. Frieden, MD, MPH
Director
Centers for Disease Control and Prevention
1600 Clifton Road
Atlanta, GA 30333

Dear Director Frieden:

As you know, the United States is currently experiencing a crisis at our southern border. The influx of families and unaccompanied children at the border poses many risks, including grave public health threats.

As a physician for over thirty years, I am well aware of the dangers infectious diseases pose. In fact, infectious diseases remain in the top ten causes of death in the United States. However, the United States has been successful in mitigating or eradicating many diseases, and others are not indigenous to this country. As such, reports of illegal migrants carrying deadly diseases such as swine flu, dengue fever, Ebola virus, and tuberculosis are particularly concerning. Many of the children who are coming across the border also lack basic vaccinations such as those to prevent chicken pox or measles. This makes those Americans that are not vaccinated—and especially young children and the elderly—particularly susceptible.

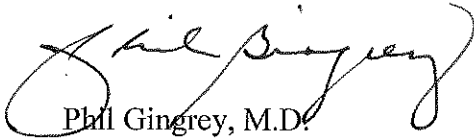
Reports have indicated that several border agents have contracted diseases through contact with the unaccompanied minors. As the unaccompanied children continue to be transported to shelters around the country on commercial airlines and other forms of transportation, I have serious concerns that the diseases carried by these children may begin to spread too rapidly to control. In fact, as you undoubtedly know, some of these diseases have no known cure.

I am aware that the CDC is activating its Emergency Operations Center (EOC) in response to the growing public health crisis posed by the influx of minors, yet information regarding this activation has been sparse. While I think activation of the EOC is an important step in recognizing the severe and dangerous nature of this crisis, I firmly believe the public deserves to know the specific actions the EOC and other departments of the CDC are taking to combat and prevent the spread of communicable diseases.

I request that the CDC take immediate action to assess the public risk posed by the influx of unaccompanied children and their subsequent transfer to different parts of the country. I strongly feel that the public should be notified of this risk, and that all appropriate departments should be

actively seeking solutions to mitigate what could become a public health crisis. I would also like information on what is being done to protect border patrol agents who come in contact with these diseases, what decontamination efforts are taking place, and what is included in medical screenings of the children. Additionally, I believe that medical providers should be put on alert and that the CDC should provide guidelines to the public about how to protect themselves from potential infection.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Phil Gingrey". The signature is written in dark ink and is positioned above the printed name.

Phil Gingrey, M.D.
Member of Congress