

# United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

October 28, 2021

The Honorable Xavier Becerra  
Secretary of Health and Human Services  
Department of Health and Human Services  
Washington, DC 20201

Dear Secretary Becerra,

I write regarding the need to bolster the domestic supply chain for rapid response COVID-19 testing kits. As schools and sectors of the economy continue to reopen, we must be capable of testing individuals efficiently and effectively to stem the spread of COVID-19. I urge you to continue efforts to ensure that the federal government can procure and distribute the rapid tests required to safely reopen our communities.

Due to the recent surge of COVID-19 cases this summer, increased demand for rapid tests has greatly diminished the supply of these critical tools. I know that the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) has been working with manufacturers of COVID-19 testing kits to ramp up production over the next several weeks, including already investing over half a billion dollars from the American Rescue Plan to increase the domestic testing supply. I was also encouraged to see President Biden announce that his Administration plans to invest three billion dollars in rapid testing to greatly expand the supply by December. I urge you to build on these efforts as we continue accelerating production to ensure that states and localities can meet the demand for testing through the fall and winter.

New Hampshire schools have experienced numerous outbreaks of COVID-19 cases among students and teachers. School nurses do their best to follow public health guidance by sending students home if they have a new, unexplained symptom of COVID-19. In most cases, students cannot return to school until their symptoms improve and they receive a negative COVID-19 test. Rapid testing ensures that students can receive their results quickly and return to in-person learning without significant gaps in their education. These tests also help prevent widespread disruptions in education where schools are forced to switch to remote learning due to substantial transmission of the virus.

Rapid testing capabilities are also critical to ensuring that businesses are able to operate in this uncertain environment. Employees depend on rapid testing to ensure that they can return to work after a potential exposure or troubling symptoms without infecting their coworkers. Employers need to account for the safety of their workers by stopping the potential spread of COVID-19 at the outset. These rapid tests help keep our economy open and our workforce protected against the widespread transmission of the virus.

I urge you to continue using every tool at your disposal to ensure that New Hampshire and all states have the supply of rapid COVID-19 testing kits needed to beat this pandemic. I appreciate

your commitment to ending the pandemic and working with all partners, public and private, to procure the necessary materials to keep our communities safe and open.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Jeanne Shaheen". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Jeanne" and last name "Shaheen" clearly distinguishable.

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Jeanne Shaheen  
United States Senator