

they were going to use up the protective equipment and masks and gloves, for example, that they had available. They didn't know where to turn for more.

Let's get this together. I believe there is a national stockpile, and I believe it should be open for the States that need it immediately. Our State is one of those.

Referring to these ventilators and breathing devices, in a press conference a couple of days ago, the President said the Governors should do their best. We can do better than that. The largest stockpile of this equipment is in possession of the Federal Government, and we should turn to it quickly to help those in need.

I am very concerned as well—I will close. I see other colleagues on the floor, and I know they would like to make comments as well. I will close by also saying that as we undertake the next piece of legislation—the \$800, \$900, \$1 trillion bill—I hope the first priority is to make sure we help our hospitals.

I have a measure with Senator LANKFORD, Republican of Oklahoma, that will compensate hospitals in rural areas and downstate areas in Illinois. I am fearful they will be the first to be overwhelmed. I hope those representing rural States will come together and join, as Senator LANKFORD and I have, to try to find a way to make sure they are adequately funded to get through this crisis.

I might add that we also need medical professionals in the long term. I hope we will dedicate ourselves to improving the National Health Service Corps as one way of doing that and focusing that in rural areas.

Finally, I have a bill with Senator ALEXANDER, Senator MURRAY, and Senator BLUNT to take a survey through the National Academy of Sciences of our dependence on foreign-made medicines and medical supplies and medical equipment so that we can establish, not only during this challenge and crisis but for future challenges and crises—whether we have adequate domestic production capacity or a necessary stockpiles to protect us. We found, for example, that some 20 major drugs were manufactured exclusively in China. As China went through the early stages of this coronavirus crisis, there was a fear that we would be cut off from sources. We have asked the National Academy of Science to give us a survey as quickly as possible.

I will close by saying that it is interesting, as I follow the emails of my friends and family and hear from my colleagues, that as we are separated with this social distance which we are trying to respect across the United States—as we are separated, it is interesting how much we are drawn together. Our family's emails and phone calls have been more numerous than ever as we think about one another more and reach out as we hear that there is a need within our family. There is more conversation and candor

than I can ever recall in our family conversations.

Perhaps adversity has created community. Perhaps this situation, this concern that we have, is leading to more empathy.

We are going to get through this. America always does. There will be some painful moments and very difficult ones. I think those who sent us to do this job in Washington expect us to put our party labels at the door, find solutions to the challenges we face, help our Nation through this crisis, and come out strong on the other side.

I yield the floor.

RECOGNITION OF THE MINORITY LEADER

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Democratic leader is recognized.

CORONAVIRUS

Mr. SCHUMER. Madam President, I thank my good friend, the Senator from South Dakota, for his usual display of patience.

The coronavirus pandemic continues to test our Nation in new and difficult ways. There is now a confirmed case of coronavirus in all 50 States and the District of Columbia. Our public health system was understaffed and underresourced, and without intervention, it could soon become overwhelmed.

Even as the market shifts from day to day, the coronavirus is slowing our economy to a near-standstill, and we are almost certainly anticipating a recession. You go to the streets of many cities, towns, and villages, and they are empty. Schools are closed in large portions of the country. Businesses are struggling not to lay off workers because they don't have customers, they don't have clients, and they don't have income. There is great urgency here.

There are really two separate and simultaneous emergencies—one in our healthcare system and another in the economy. We have to deal with both. If we don't solve the one in our healthcare, the economy will continue to get bad no matter what we do for it.

Less tangible than those two emergencies but still very real is the impact the virus is having on American society. My home city of New York is effectively on lockdown. You can go to a place like the Times Square subway station and see actually nobody there. Americans are being asked—rightly—not to gather in groups of 10 or more, not to go to dinner or to a bar or to their church or place of worship.

I lived through 9/11. It occurred in my city. I knew people who were lost. I lived through the days of the financial crisis in 2008 and other moments of national urgency. But there is something much worse about this crisis we face. I have never sensed a greater sense of uncertainty, a greater fear of the future, of the unknown. We don't know how long this crisis will last.

You don't even know if you contracted the virus right away, or maybe your spouse, maybe your child, maybe your parent, maybe your friend.

Then there is a much greater sense of isolation, a problem for which there is no cure. I miss not meeting and talking to my constituents. They are our lifeblood. That is not happening just to us here in the Senate; it is happening across America—friends who used to get together and families who had gatherings. Different social activities are gone—book clubs, card games. The fabric and sinew of our lives as human beings have been put on hold, and nobody knows for how long.

By necessity, Americans are now sacrificing their normal lives and daily routines and, maybe worst of all, sacrificing the sense of community because we all, each individually and together as a country, must fight this awful virus.

Unfortunately, we are only just beginning to see the necessary seriousness and mobilization of resources from the Federal Government. Sadly, unfortunately, and with awful consequences, this administration took far too long to wake up to this global crisis. It has wasted precious weeks in downplaying the severity of the coronavirus—weeks that could have been spent in earnest in the preparation of building our testing capacity. As a result, the United States continues to lag behind other countries in the number and the percentage of the population we are testing.

Stories of Americans who feel sick and show symptoms but who are unable to access coronavirus tests appear every day in every single newspaper. Warnings of the potential shortages of masks, hospital beds, and ventilators appear in the paper every day. In 2 weeks, the issue of ventilators and ICU beds will be like the issue of tests today. In other words, 2 or 3 weeks ago, many of us were saying to get those tests out. A month ago, people were saying it, and now we are seeing the consequences—lockdowns because we can't test people. We don't know who has the virus and who doesn't. The same crisis will be occurring in a few weeks. Mark our words. Unfortunately, it is true about ventilators and ICU beds. We are behind the eight ball on tests, and we are soon going to be behind the eight ball on ICU beds and ventilators as more and more people get sick.

The administration didn't pay attention to tests, and now we are paying the price even though many of us were hollering for weeks about the emerging issues with testing. The same problem is about to happen with ventilators. We know, in 2 weeks, the number of ventilators might become a massive problem. We must get ahead of it and get ahead of it now. I call on President Trump to use his existing authority to help address the widespread shortages of medical equipment, particularly ventilators, as a result of the COVID-19 outbreak.