



Centers for Disease Control  
and Prevention (CDC)  
Atlanta GA 30329-4027

June 18, 2020

Julie Hedrick  
National President  
Association of Professional Flight Attendants  
1004 West Eules Boulevard  
Eules, Texas 76040

Dear Ms. Hedrick:

Thank you for your recent letter to Dr. Robert R. Redfield, director of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) regarding the Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19) pandemic and the issues facing the members of the Association of Professional Flight Attendants and the airline industry.

With more than 5,000 personnel supporting the pandemic response, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) is at the forefront of the federal government's efforts to control the spread of COVID-19. Our decades fighting pandemics gives us the experience needed to mitigate the impact of this virus to the American public.

CDC created the *Air Travel Toolkit for Airline Partners* to assist them in communicating with their customers and employees about COVID-19 prevention ([www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/travelers/airline-toolkit.html](http://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/travelers/airline-toolkit.html)). This communications toolkit provides messages, graphics, and products to support timely messaging to travelers and employees, share CDC resources with airline partners, and help airline partners develop additional COVID-19 materials.

Employers should also consider following the *White House Guidelines for Opening Up America Again* ([www.whitehouse.gov/openingamerica](http://www.whitehouse.gov/openingamerica)), a phased approach based on current levels of transmission and healthcare capacity at the state or local level, as part of resuming business operations. CDC has guidance for mitigation strategies ([www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/downloads/community-mitigation-strategy.pdf](http://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/downloads/community-mitigation-strategy.pdf)) according to the level of community transmission or impact of COVID-19. Business operation decisions should be based on both the level of disease transmission in the community, employer's readiness to protect the safety and health of their employees and customers, and coordination with state and local health officials to obtain timely and accurate information to inform appropriate responses. Local conditions will influence the decisions that public health officials make regarding community-level strategies.

With respect to the specific safety concerns outlined in your letter, we share your urgency regarding personal protective equipment (PPE) for employees who anticipate close contact with persons with confirmed or possible COVID-19 in the course of their work. Please note that CDC does not consider cloth face coverings to be PPE. The criteria for priority evaluation of the nationwide distribution of PPE and testing priorities are not currently under CDC. PPE distribution decisions are made under the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA).

FEMA would be better able to address your concerns.

FEMA  
500 C Street SW  
Washington, DC 20472  
(202) 646-2500  
[www.fema.gov](http://www.fema.gov)

CDC has written interim guidance for the airline industry that addresses aircraft cleaning, social distancing, and steps to be taken by airlines and crew members if one of them becomes symptomatic or is exposed, *COVID-19: Updated Interim Occupational Health and Safety Guidance for Air Carriers and Crews*, jointly developed with the Federal Aviation Administration, available at [www.faa.gov/other\\_visit/aviation\\_industry/airline\\_operators/airline\\_safety/safo/all\\_safos/media/2020/SAFO20009.pdf](http://www.faa.gov/other_visit/aviation_industry/airline_operators/airline_safety/safo/all_safos/media/2020/SAFO20009.pdf) and *Updated Interim Guidance for Airlines and Airline Crew: Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19)*, available at [www.cdc.gov/quarantine/air/managing-sick-travelers/ncov-airlines.html](http://www.cdc.gov/quarantine/air/managing-sick-travelers/ncov-airlines.html).

Other industry-specific fact sheets are available at [www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/worker-safety-support/index.html](http://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/worker-safety-support/index.html). Additionally, CDC has developed general information for businesses and workplaces to help them plan, prepare, and response to COVID-19 ([www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/organizations/businesses-employers.html](http://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/organizations/businesses-employers.html)).

With respect to contact tracing, CDC's primary role is to provide guidance and support to state, territorial, local, and tribal (STLT) health departments in the development and implementation of effective contact tracing programs. The goal is for STLT jurisdictions to have robust public health systems which include a fully developed contact tracing infrastructure. When CDC is made aware of a potential exposure on board an aircraft, CDC works with the airlines to collect pertinent traveler information that is then provided to STLT health departments in support of their contact investigations. As it pertains to crew specifically, we also notify our point of contact with the airlines so that they can notify their staff and provide appropriate occupational health guidance. CDC works with FAA to provide appropriate public health guidance for COVID-19 mitigation response and measures to airlines and their occupational health programs, as noted in the hyperlinks above.

As for COVID-19 testing, CDC is currently focused on the immediate testing needs of States to execute their State testing plans. The Federal Government will work with states, as needed, to develop and implement testing and surveillance solutions to the challenges faced by critical infrastructure sectors, including the Transportation Systems Sector. Please note that testing strategies for this current outbreak will likely shift over time given transmission dynamics and new technology.

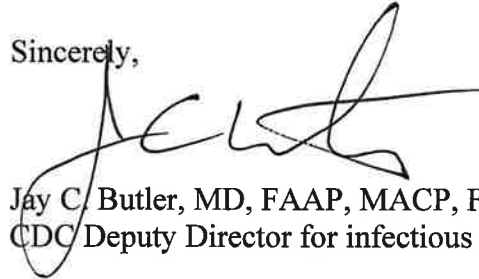
Finally, we appreciate your perspective on hazard pay for frontline workers; however, this is outside of CDC's purview.

CDC remains committed to protecting the American public in the face of this pandemic. There is much more to learn about the transmissibility, severity, and other characteristics of COVID-19 and investigations are ongoing. We are adjusting our response and guidance as conditions change and as we learn more about this emerging infectious disease. Please visit our COVID-19 website

[www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/index.html](http://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/index.html) regularly for CDC's latest and most up-to-date information, resources, and guidance.

Thank you for the work you do on behalf of members of the airline industry and for your interest in this ongoing response.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "J. Butler", with a large, stylized flourish extending from the end of the signature.

Jay C. Butler, MD, FAAP, MACP, FIDSA  
CDC Deputy Director for infectious Diseases