

United States Senate  
WASHINGTON, DC 20510

March 8, 2021

**VIA ELECTRONIC TRANSMISSION**

The Honorable Avril Haines  
Director of National Intelligence

Mr. Norris Cochran  
Acting Director  
Department of Health and Human Services

Dear Director Haines and Acting Director Cochran:

On February 4, 2020, my oversight and investigations staff received a classified briefing from the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS), Office of National Security regarding the SARS-CoV-2 (hereinafter “coronavirus”) threat and the status of the U.S. government’s efforts to combat the spread of the deadly virus.<sup>1</sup> From the beginning, my goal has been to ensure a robust federal response to the threat and to better understand the origins of the virus. For example, there is still considerable debate about whether the coronavirus is a naturally occurring virus, a naturally occurring virus that escaped from a lab, or a laboratory manipulated virus that escaped from a lab.

In December 2020, a team of World Health Organization (WHO) researchers and scientists traveled to Wuhan, China to investigate the origins of coronavirus. However, according to recent reports, China refused to grant WHO researchers access to anonymized raw data from the earliest days of the outbreak which would help pinpoint the origins of the virus.<sup>2</sup> Instead, China produced self-generated summaries and analyses of the data which could have been manipulated by the communist Chinese government, effectively preventing a real review.<sup>3</sup>

In early February last year, I warned about China’s reluctance to share data regarding the coronavirus outbreak.<sup>4</sup> I also noted that China’s failure to cooperate made it more important for the Intelligence Community and HHS to work together to ensure information is efficiently

---

<sup>1</sup> Press Release, Grassley Receives Classified Briefing on Coronavirus (Feb. 4, 2020),

<https://www.grassley.senate.gov/news/news-releases/grassley-receives-classified-briefing-coronavirus>.

<sup>2</sup> Jeremy Page et al., *China Refuse to Give WHO Raw Data on Early COVID-19 Cases*, WALL ST. J. (Feb. 12, 2021), <https://www.wsj.com/articles/china-refuses-to-give-who-raw-data-on-early-covid-19-cases-11613150580>.

<sup>3</sup>*Id.*

<sup>4</sup> Press Release, Grassley Urges More Information Sharing Between Health, Intelligence Agencies (Mar. 24, 2020), <https://www.grassley.senate.gov/news/news-releases/grassley-urges-more-information-sharing-between-health-intelligence-agencies>; Press Release, Grassley Receives Classified Briefing on Coronavirus (Feb. 4, 2020), <https://www.grassley.senate.gov/news/news-releases/grassley-receives-classified-briefing-coronavirus>.

shared between them. The Trump administration ensured that federal health agencies had a seat at the table within the Intelligence Community and access to information relating to the pandemic. That cooperation and access must continue and be built upon to better combat the virus and determine its origins.

More than 500,000 Americans have died as a result of the coronavirus pandemic and trillions of taxpayer dollars have been spent to shore up our economy and take care of our citizens. Congress and the American public have a right to know and understand what work the government has done to determine the origins of the coronavirus. Accordingly, in light of your agency's role with respect to the pandemic, no later than March 22, 2021, please provide the following:

1. All information disseminated to the National Intelligence Council relating to the coronavirus pandemic.
2. All records relating to detailed genomic sequencing analyses for SARS-CoV-2 and related coronaviruses, including all records relating to research about the receptor binding domain of pangolin origin coronavirus and furin-cleavage site insertion.
3. All records relating to detailed genomic sequencing analyses on the similarities between SARS-CoV-2 and any previous published and/or unpublished work by the Wuhan Institute of Virology on coronavirus chimeras.
4. All records relating to detailed genomic sequencing analyses on the similarities between SARS-CoV-2 and genomic sequencing analyses on miners that were hospitalized in Yunnan Province in and around 2012.
5. All records relating to all analyses with respect to the capabilities of the Wuhan Institute of Virology to manipulate bat coronaviruses using reverse genetic technologies.
6. All records relating to illnesses at the Wuhan Institute of Virology among its personnel and scientific staff during the Fall of 2019. In your answer, please describe the type of work these employees were engaged in.
7. All records relating to work conducted at the Wuhan Institute of Virology by Chinese government agencies prior to and during Fall of 2019.
8. Please describe the steps you have taken to continue to incorporate the Department of Health and Human Services into missions involving threats to the nation's health care, including access to Intelligence Community information, and the steps you have taken to improve upon the information access provided by the Trump administration.

9. In light of the National Institutes of Health funding operations at the Wuhan Institute of Virology, please describe the steps you took to oversee the research done at the Wuhan Institute of Virology.

Please send all unclassified material directly to the Committee. In keeping with the requirements of Executive Order 13526, if any of the responsive documents do contain classified information, please segregate all unclassified material within the classified documents, provide all unclassified information directly to the Committee, and provide a classified addendum to the Office of Senate Security. Although the Committee complies with all laws and regulations governing the handling of classified information, it is not bound, absent its prior agreement, by any handling restrictions.

Thank you for your attention to this important matter.

Sincerely,



Charles E. Grassley  
Ranking Member  
Committee on the Judiciary