

JAY INSLEE
Governor



STATE OF WASHINGTON
Office of the Governor

March 17, 2020

The Honorable Donald J. Trump
President of the United States of America
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Ave NW
Washington, DC 20500

Dear President Trump:

I am asking that you send the U.S.S. Mercy to the Puget Sound region immediately. Washington represents two percent of the American population, 20 percent of the COVID-19 infections, and 61 percent of the fatalities caused by COVID-19. It is clear that our medical capacity is the first to be impacted and is now the most severely challenged in the nation. While we are taking very aggressive measures to slow the spread of this deadly disease among our vulnerable citizens, it is becoming clear that our hospitals will be overwhelmed soon. To address this urgent situation, I am asking that you send one of the U.S. Navy's hospital ships to Seattle as soon as possible. We anticipate that our hospitals will be in crisis by the end of this month.

With each day that passes, the number of available physicians and nurses in Washington decreases as illness and fatigue take their toll. Unfortunately, one of our doctors who has been at the center of the health care response is now in critical condition. As the number of available medical professionals decreases, we do not have the ability to handle the surge in new COVID-19 patients on our own. The Navy hospital ship comes with a full crew of doctors, nurses, and medical care professionals.

In addition to our inability to provide additional medical staff, we also face difficulties acquiring additional medical equipment and personal Protective Equipment (PPE). There simply is not enough in the broken supply chain to meet the need. The Navy hospital ship comes completely equipped as a functioning hospital that could help us meet the surge in demand for hospitalization.

We inquired about the possibility of utilizing an Army Field Hospital to meet our needs. Unfortunately, the only Army medical assets in the local area belong to the U.S. Army Reserve. The doctors and nurses who provide the medical staff of the Army Reserve are the same doctors and nurses who are currently working in our local hospitals in their civilian capacity. It does us no good to remove them from the important work they are doing to save lives as civilians.

Finally, I can think of no better way to signal to the residents of Washington that their Federal government is fully committed to their health and survival than the sight of a large U.S. Navy hospital ship dropping anchor in the harbor at Seattle. The psychological value to our citizens, not only in Washington but also across the nation, would be of major importance. Thank you for your support of this request.

Very truly yours,

Jay Inslee
Governor

