

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

March 1, 2022

Rochelle P. Walensky, M.D., MPH
Director
Centers for Disease Control and Prevention

Dear Director Walensky:

Over the last year, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) has failed to be transparent to the American people and their elected representatives. Specifically, CDC has not responded to my multiple requests for information about COVID-19. In addition, CDC has reportedly “withheld information” about COVID-19 from the public that “could help state and local health officials better target their efforts to bring the virus under control.”¹ In the midst of a pandemic, it is unacceptable that CDC would withhold relevant data on COVID-19 that could inform the public and potentially save lives. Moreover, it is grossly arrogant that your agency has repeatedly ignored Congressional requests.

To date, I have sent you numerous letters requesting information about COVID-19 including records and data on the virus, school guidance, and the vaccines. For the letters listed below, you have either failed to respond or your response was significantly incomplete:

- **May 19, 2021** – Requesting records relating to teachers’ unions and CDC guidance.
- **June 28, 2021** – Requesting information about COVID-19 vaccine adverse events.
- **July 13, 2021** – Requesting information on vaccine safety monitoring.
- **July 30, 2021** – Requesting data CDC used to create a slide deck on COVID-19 vaccine effectiveness.
- **August 22, 2021** – Regarding the Vaccines and Related Biological Products Advisory Committee meeting.
- **September 15, 2021** – Requesting information on the effectiveness of natural immunity as protection from COVID-19.
- **October 5, 2021** – Requesting information on early treatments for COVID-19.
- **December 29, 2021** – Requesting information about vaccine lot variation data.

¹ Apoorva Mandavilli, *The C.D.C. isn’t publishing large portions of the Covid data it collects*, NY Times, Feb. 21, 2022, <https://www.nytimes.com/2022/02/20/health/the-cdc-isnt-publishing-large-portions-of-the-covid-data-it-collects.html>.

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CDC's failure to respond to Congress appears to be one piece of the agency's larger problem with public transparency. According to the *New York Times*, during the "[t]wo full years into the pandemic, the [CDC] has published only a tiny fraction of the data it has collected."² The CDC's apparent indifference toward transparency during a pandemic is disturbing and shameful.

Throughout the pandemic, CDC and other health agencies have promoted inconsistent policies and recommendations regarding COVID-19. Many Americans who voiced concerns about these shifting policies have been subjected to ridicule, vilification, and censorship from the press. Rather than provide the public with complete access to relevant data to justify its COVID-19 policies, the Biden Administration has apparently favored censorship over transparency.

In my continued effort to ensure that the American people have access to complete and accurate data about COVID-19, I renew my previous requests and call on you to immediately respond to all of my outstanding letters. Additionally, I would like you to brief my staff on whether CDC is withholding data from the public as reported by the *New York Times* and provide the names and titles of CDC officials who may have withheld the relevant information. I ask that this briefing occur no later than March 15, 2022. Thank you for your attention to this matter.

Sincerely,



Ron Johnson
United States Senator

cc: The Honorable Xavier Becerra
Secretary
Department of Health and Human Services

The Honorable Christi Grimm
Inspector General
Department of Health and Human Services

² *Id.*