

Congress of the United States

House of Representatives

SELECT SUBCOMMITTEE ON THE CORONAVIRUS PANDEMIC

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Majority (202) 225-5074
Minority (202) 225-5051

September 7, 2023

The Honorable Xavier Becerra
Secretary
U.S. Department of Health and Human Services
200 Independence Avenue, S.W.
Washington, D.C. 20201

Dear Secretary Becerra,

On August 23, 2023, we wrote to you asking for documents and information regarding highly concerning reports stemming from a dangerous unlicensed lab operating in Fresno County, California.¹ According to reports, this lab was conducting dangerous research involving COVID-19 and other viruses.² As of today, the Department has failed to respond.

To properly carry-out the Select Subcommittee's missions, including assessing the government's ability to keep America safe from biological threats and assessing legislative solutions regarding biosafety and biosecurity, we must have the full cooperation of federal agencies. If the Department fails to comply with our legitimate oversight requests, we will be forced to evaluate the use of the compulsory process.

Therefore, we write to you today to reiterate our requests in our previous letter. Please provide the following documents and information as soon as possible but no later than September 14, 2023:

1. All documents and communications, between or among employees or contractors of the Department, specifically including but not limited to those in the custody or control of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and/or the Food and Drug Administration (FDA), regarding Prestige Biotech, Inc. or Universal Meditech, Inc.
2. All documents and communications between or among the Department and other federal, state, or local government entities, including but not limited to the FBI, the California Department of Public Health, the California Department of Toxic Substance Control, the Office of the Governor of California, Fresno County, or the

¹ Letter from Brad Wenstrup, D.P.M., *et al.*, Chairman, Select Subcomm. on the Coronavirus Pandemic, to Xavier Becerra, Sec'y, U.S. Dep't of Health and Human Services (Aug. 23, 2023).

² Daniel Gligich, *Secret biological lab uncovered in Reedley containing bioengineered COVID-19 mice*, THE SAN JOAQUIN VALLEY SUN (July 27, 2023) available at <https://sjvsun.com/news/fresno/secret-biological-lab-uncoveredin-reedley-containing-bioengineered-covid-19-mice/>.

City of Reedley, regarding Prestige Biotech, Inc. or Universal Meditech, Inc.

3. All documents and communications regarding or produced during or response to the May 2-4, 2023, CDC Division of Select Agents and Toxins inspections of the laboratory.

In addition to the requested documents, the Select Subcommittee may request employees of the Department participate in voluntary transcribed interviews.

The Select Subcommittee is authorized to investigate “the origins of the Coronavirus pandemic” and “the implementation or effectiveness of any Federal law or regulation applied, enacted, or under consideration to address the coronavirus pandemic and prepare for future pandemics.”³ To that end, the Select Subcommittee is tasked to learn from the U.S. response to the COVID-19 pandemic and recommend alterations where necessary to enhance our preparedness and responses in the future. To ask any follow-up or related questions please contact Committee staff at (202) 225-5074.

Thank you for your attention to this very important matter.

Sincerely,



Brad Wenstrup, D.P.M.
Chairman

cc: The Honorable Raul Ruiz, M.D., Ranking Member
Select Subcommittee on the Coronavirus Pandemic

Mandy Cohen, M.D., M.P.H., Director
Centers for Disease Control and Prevention

The Honorable Robert Califf, M.D., Commissioner
Food and Drug Administration

³ H. Res. 5 § 4(a) (2023).