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**Congress of the United States**  
**House of Representatives**  
**Washington, DC 20515-0913**

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Florida Surgeon General Scott Rivkees  
Florida Department of Health  
4052 Bald Cypress Way  
Tallahassee, FL 32399

Dear Dr. Rivkees,

As you know, the world is confronting a global health emergency. A novel coronavirus has spread across the globe and has been shown to be particularly contagious – even before an infected person shows symptoms.

With new information coming out every day, my constituents are concerned about what the virus could mean for them and their families and what the State of Florida is doing to keep them safe. They want to be informed and engaged, not left in the dark like what they are seeing out of China. By concealing early information about the disease, the Chinese government enabled its spread – along with the spread of fear and misinformation. To avoid a repeat of that in Florida, transparency is key.

While statute does allow the Department of Health to withhold medical information to protect patient privacy, that statute also makes allowances in cases of contagious diseases that pose a clear threat to public health. Given the alarming contagion and death rates coming out of China and around the world, it is clear that information regarding the location, demographics, and circumstances around potential Coronavirus transmission falls into this exception and should be disclosed for the sake of public safety, as was done during the Zika virus outbreak in 2017. Anything less than full transparency puts all Floridians at risk, especially children, the elderly, and the immuno-compromised.

Our number one job is protecting our fellow Floridians. I hope the Florida Department of Health will take this sound step to keep us safe.

Sincerely,



Charlie Crist  
UNITED STATES CONGRESSMAN