



U.S. Customs and
Border Protection

**Oral Statement of William Ferrara, Executive Assistant Commissioner for Operations Support
Before the U.S Senate Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation, Subcommittee on
Aviation and Space
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Good afternoon Chairman Cruz, Ranking Member Sinema, and Members of the Subcommittee. Thank you for the opportunity to testify today on CBP's response to the coronavirus, or COVID-19.

U.S. Customs and Border Protection (CBP) is an integral part of the U.S. Government's response to the virus, as our men and women serve as the first line of defense at – *and between* – all U.S. ports of entry, whether land, air, or sea.

CBP has been engaged and working closely with the Department of Homeland Security (DHS), the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), and other interagency partners since cases of the virus in China began to increase. CBP and its federal partners have taken decisive, proactive, and preemptive action to mitigate the threat, minimize risk, and slow the spread of the virus.

With limited exceptions, all foreign nationals who have traveled to China or Iran within 14 days are ineligible to enter the United States at

this time. DHS, including CBP, continues to work very closely with our partners at the CDC to route all admissible persons who have been in mainland China or Iran in the last 14 days to one of 11 designated ports of entry – or POEs – where the Federal Government has focused public health resources.

All flights coming from mainland China are funneled to one of the 11 designated POEs. There are no direct flights from Iran; however, all passengers coming from Iran are also funneled to one of the 11 POEs. For passengers traveling to the U.S. by air, we also work in collaboration with air carriers and foreign partners to deny the boarding of individuals that would be found inadmissible upon arrival in the U.S.

CBP continues to facilitate CDC's enhanced health screening of travelers entering the United States. These screening measures are a critical part of the U.S. government strategy to slow the spread of the virus and protect the American people.

All travelers who have been in People's Republic of China, excluding the Special Administrative Regions of Hong Kong and

Macau, and Islamic Republic of Iran within the past 14 days or who exhibit symptoms consistent with COVID-19 are sent to CDC staff or DHS Countering Weapons of Mass Destruction (CWMD) contract personnel for a medical evaluation.

Travelers identified by CBP officers during their primary inspection are referred to a secondary screening area. In the secondary screening area, DHS CWMD contract personnel are taking the following actions in support of CDC: verifying enhanced screening is required, collecting contact information for travelers requiring enhanced health screening, asking travelers about health status (fever, cough, or difficulty breathing), and taking and recording traveler temperatures.

CWMD is currently supporting CDC's enhanced health screening efforts through agreements with state or local EMS, public health, and first responders in an overtime capacity. CWMD established this capability in response to the Ebola virus threat. These actions ensured a trained, vetted, and badged workforce was ready to rapidly deploy to support the CDC. DHS was able to use this established capability to quickly address the threat of COVID-19.

At and between all ports of entry, CBP officers and agents continue to remain alert and notify CDC and other public health officials when encountering travelers exhibiting signs of overt illness. Officers and agents are well trained, and use a combination of traveler history records, questioning and observation, and self-declarations to identify those requiring additional health screening. CBP also works closely with the U.S. Coast Guard to ensure all cargo ships and crew with a nexus to China and Iran are appropriately identified and screened prior to coming into port.

At CBP, our employees are our greatest asset. We are taking every precaution to keep our workforce safe, especially those who may regularly encounter potential disease carriers. All of CBP's operational offices have a 30 day supply of personal protective equipment or PPE including gloves, masks, Tyvek coveralls, and hand sanitizer; these are located locally across all Field Offices, Sectors, and Air Branches. CBP continues to work with DHS and the CDC to monitor global supply chain impacts and project critical PPE needs for the CBP workforce.

On February 5, 2020, CBP issued an updated Job Hazard Analysis to all employees that outlines the current comprehensive PPE guidance, which includes guidance about wearing masks under the appropriate circumstances. CBP continues to share information with its workforce on an ongoing basis. We are committed to doing all that we can to keep our workforce safe, as they work to ensure the safety of our nation.

Thank you for the opportunity to appear today, and I look forward to your questions.