

February 20, 2019

The Honorable Kirstjen M. Nielsen  
Secretary of Homeland Security  
3801 Nebraska Avenue, NW  
Washington, D.C. 20530

Dear Madam Secretary:

The Denver Contract Detention Facility (the “Facility”) is located in Aurora, Colorado and within Colorado’s 6th Congressional District. The Facility is owned and managed by the GEO Group (“GEO”) in a contract with Immigration and Customs Enforcement (“ICE”). As the U.S. representative for the 6th Congressional District, I write to you with some serious concerns and questions regarding the recent expansion of the Facility.

Earlier this year, GEO Group remodeled the Facility’s annex, allowing for 432 more detainee beds and increasing overall capacity to 1,532, an increase of nearly 40%. As I am sure you are aware, a detention center of this size requires the support of local health and safety agencies. The expansion of the Facility was done without coordination with local agencies and could pose substantial risk to both detainees and first responders.

The expansion of the Facility comes on the heels of two varicella (chicken pox) outbreaks within months of one another, subjecting dozens of inmates to lengthy quarantines. Of note, it is my understanding that the Facility only has one physician for the entire population, even after the recent increase in detainees.

I take my responsibility to ensure the safety of our community, including individuals detained in our community, very seriously. As part of my duty to conduct federal oversight in my district, I respectfully request that you respond to the following questions:

1. Please explain the number and types of disease outbreaks (i.e. chicken pox) and the number of outbreaks that have led to quarantines in the past year at the Denver Contract Detention Facility in Aurora. What are the reporting criteria and requirements for outbreaks and which entities receive the reports?
2. What actions have ICE and GEO taken to respond to the recent varicella outbreaks and what measures are being put in place to prevent future outbreaks?

3. Will ICE direct GEO to hire more properly-trained medical staff to accommodate the increase in detainee admissions? Please also describe what contract requirements and oversight are in place to ensure that detainees receive proper medical attention.
4. What requirements are in contract or other guidance with GEO to ensure that detainees are provided proper medical care?
5. Please describe the contract relationship between ICE and GEO and attach copies of the relevant contract documents (e.g. agreements, MOUs, guidance, etc.).
6. Since 2015, how many 911 calls were placed from the Facility to City of Aurora or State of Colorado emergency professionals?
7. When privately run facilities fail to comply with code, ICE has the opportunity to issue compliance waivers essentially forgiving them for the breach. Has ICE issued any compliance waivers for the Facility? If so, how many, and what were the reasons for those waivers?
8. Since 2015, has ICE submitted a Contract Discrepancy Report for the Facility following the granting of any compliance waivers? If so, please attach any and all such reports in your response.

Thank you for your prompt consideration of this request.

Sincerely,

Jason Crow  
Member of Congress