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COMMITTEE ON ENERGY  
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May 19, 2010

The Honorable Kathleen Sebelius  
Secretary  
The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS)  
200 Independence Avenue, S.W.  
Washington, D.C. 20201

Dear Secretary Sebelius:

I write to you today requesting your assistance in securing needed health care services for workers, volunteers, and residents of the regions in Louisiana affected by the April 20, 2010, oil spill in the Gulf of Mexico. Your leadership and dedication to health care services is desperately needed by those affected by this tragedy.


I call on you to appoint a health care coordinator to oversee and streamline the health care response from the federal government, state government, private organizations, and British Petroleum (BP). Appointing a senior level staff person from HHS would signal to the residents and volunteers that their well being is of the utmost importance to the Administration. One of the most important lessons we have learned post-Katrina is the need for coordination of relief and volunteer efforts, and staff from your office would most appropriately fill that role.

Secondly, I ask that you deploy any and all resources at your disposal to establish temporary health care clinics in the affected area. Many residents and volunteers are being exposed to hazardous materials on a daily basis, and some will have to travel hours to get treatment at the nearest health care facility. It is imperative that temporary health care clinics be established to provide basic health care services in this geographic area.

While I am requesting your assistance, I believe that BP and other companies involved should ultimately bear the costs of organizing and providing these health care services. It is the companies' responsibility and theirs alone in light of their negligence in this situation.

Thank you for your attention to this letter, and I look forward to speaking with you soon about these requests.

Sincerely,



CHARLES MELANCON  
MEMBER OF CONGRESS

CJM/vlg

cc: Doug Suttles, COO, Global Exploration and Production, British Petroleum