



December 17, 2020

The Honorable John A. Yarmuth
Chairman
Committee on the Budget
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Chairman Yarmuth:

I write in response to your June 29, 2020, letter to Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) Secretary Alex M. Azar II regarding providing to the Government Accountability Office (GAO) appropriate access to information in the course of its ongoing review related to the World Health Organization. Please know that HHS remains committed to accommodating GAO in this review, as well as the more than 360 currently open audits GAO has with the Department. The co-signers of your letter will receive an identical response.

HHS has worked with GAO through the accommodations process as GAO fulfills its statutory obligations. As Secretary Azar testified before the House Select Subcommittee on the Coronavirus Crisis on October 2, HHS is “working with GAO to assist them in fulfilling their responsibilities without negatively affecting the Department’s lifesaving mission during this historic pandemic and we remain committed to working with and accommodating GAO in its COVID-19 related work.”¹ HHS is working diligently to accommodate GAO in fulfilling its statutory obligations consistent with available resources, while preserving longstanding Executive Branch interests, and minimizing interruptions to the lifesaving mission of OWS.

If you or your staff have additional questions or concerns, please contact the HHS Office of the Assistant Secretary for Legislation at (202) 690-7627.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Sarah Arbes".

Sarah Arbes
Assistant Secretary for Legislation

¹ Hybrid Hearing with Secretary of Health and Human Services Alex M. Azar II: Hearing before the H. Subcomm. on Coronavirus Crisis, 115 Cong. (2020) (Statement of Alex M. Azar II).