

MICHAEL F. BENNET
COLORADO

COMMITTEES:
AGRICULTURE, NUTRITION, AND FORESTRY

FINANCE

HEALTH, EDUCATION, LABOR,
AND PENSIONS

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510-0609

WASHINGTON, DC:
458 RUSSELL SENATE OFFICE BUILDING
WASHINGTON, DC 20510
(202) 224-5852

COLORADO:
1127 SHERMAN STREET
SUITE 150
DENVER, CO 80203-2398
(303) 455-7600

<http://www.bennet.senate.gov>

November 1, 2018

Robert R. Redfield, MD
Director
Centers for Disease Control and Prevention
1600 Clifton Road
Atlanta, Georgia 30333

Dear Dr. Redfield:

I write regarding the increase in cases of acute flaccid myelitis (AFM) across the United States and in Colorado. Since August 2014, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) has recorded an increased number of people in the United States with AFM.¹

As you know, AFM is a rare polio-like condition, most common in children, that affects the nervous system and causes severe symptoms such as sudden weakness of the limbs and severe headaches, among other concerning signs. This year, there has been a total of 191 reports of patients under investigation, with four pending from Colorado.² The Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment (CDPHE) reported 15 out of the 72 confirmed cases of AFM across the United States this year.³ Thankfully, most of the patients in Colorado who were hospitalized for AFM with enterovirus A71 have nearly fully recovered and there were no deaths.

In response to the increase in AFM and enterovirus cases in Colorado, the CDPHE has issued multiple alerts to health care providers and specific outreach to those who provide pediatric health care services. The CDPHE also published a report with Children's Hospital Colorado and the CDC on the increase in pediatric cases testing positive with enterovirus A71.⁴ This important research adds to efforts to increase awareness and understanding of AFM in Colorado.

As treatment and some causes of AFM are unknown, I urge the CDC to provide more information about preventive measures and precautions for those who may not be familiar with the symptoms of AFM, in addition to supporting research in this space. For known causes, such as enterovirus infections, I urge CDC to support enhanced virus detection and surveillance activities. In Colorado, we are proud to be leading the charge nationwide on AFM and enterovirus research through our Children's Hospital and the University of Colorado School of Medicine. Additionally, as the CDC continues to investigate and monitor cases of AFM, I hope the agency continues to coordinate with the CDPHE to provide physicians and hospitals the support they need as they manage the increase in AFM cases.

¹ <https://www.cdc.gov/acute-flaccid-myelitis/afm-surveillance.html>


² <https://www.cdc.gov/acute-flaccid-myelitis/afm-surveillance.html>

³ <https://www.colorado.gov/pacific/cdphe/news/statement-afm>

⁴ <https://www.cdc.gov/mmwr/volumes/67/wr/mm6736a5.htm>

Thank you for your attention to this important matter. I look forward to hearing about the CDC's work to address AFM and increase awareness moving forward.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Michael F. Bennet". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke at the end.

Michael F. Bennet
United States Senator