

ONE HUNDRED FIFTEENTH CONGRESS
Congress of the United States
House of Representatives

COMMITTEE ON ENERGY AND COMMERCE

2125 RAYBURN HOUSE OFFICE BUILDING
WASHINGTON, DC 20515-6115

Majority (202) 225-2927

Minority (202) 225-3641

January 17, 2017

Dr. Thomas Frieden
Director
Centers for Disease Control and Prevention
1600 Clifton Road
Atlanta, GA 30333

Dear Dr. Frieden:

Pursuant to Rules X and XI of the U.S. House of Representatives, the Committee is examining laboratory safety at the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). According to a January 4, 2017 article in *USA Today*, redacted documents from the CDC produced in response to a Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) request show several reports of laboratory incidents involving pathogens such as those that cause anthrax, Ebola, plague, or certain avian or reconstructed flu virus strains.¹

In recent years, the Committee has conducted extensive oversight into the Federal Select Agent Program and other lab safety incidents at the CDC, such as the one involving anthrax in 2014. Because of the redactions, it is difficult to know whether the CDC has previously disclosed the incidents described in the *USA Today* article to the Committee. However, the details in the article seem to indicate that most, if not all, of these incidents were not disclosed to the Committee. To fully understand the effectiveness of current CDC lab safety efforts, the Committee needs a complete picture of the lab safety record at the CDC in recent years. Further, the Committee is interested in learning about the lab safety reporting system at the CDC, and how lab safety incidents have been tracked and are tracked at the CDC.

To assist the Committee's oversight efforts, we request that the CDC provide a briefing to Committee staff about the lab safety incidents reported in the January 4, 2017 *USA Today* article and any additional incidents covered in the 503 pages of documents that the CDC provided in response to *USA Today's* FOIA request. The briefing would also cover the CDC tracking systems for lab safety incidents.

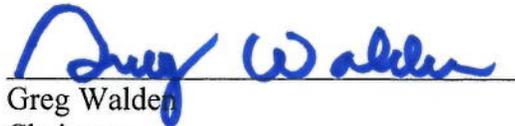
¹ Alison Young, *CDC keeps secret its mishaps with deadly germs*, USA TODAY (Jan 4, 2017) available at <http://www.usatoday.com/story/news/2017/01/04/cdc-secret-lab-incidents-select-agents/95972126/>.

In addition, please provide the following by January 31, 2017:

1. The unredacted version of the 503 pages of documents that the CDC provided to *USA Today's* FOIA request.
2. A listing of all instances of lab safety incidents at the CDC since January 1, 2012. Please include the dates, the locations, identities of the pathogens involved, description of the incident and nature of any potential or actual harm involved, and any corrective actions taken. This request covers any documents related to any incident listed not covered by Request #1 that the Committee may want produced after reviewing the list.

Your prompt assistance is appreciated. An attachment to this letter provides additional information on how to respond to the Committee's request. If you have any questions regarding this request, please contact Alan Slobodin with the Committee staff at (202) 225-2927.

Sincerely,



Greg Walden
Chairman
Committee on Energy and Commerce



Tim Murphy
Chairman
Subcommittee on Oversight
and Investigations

Attachment

cc: The Honorable Frank J. Pallone, Jr., Ranking Member
Committee on Energy and Commerce

The Honorable Dianna DeGette, Ranking Member
Subcommittee on Oversight and Investigations