

**Congress of the United States**  
**Washington, DC 20515**

May 21, 2020

The Honorable Robert R. Redfield, MD  
Director  
Centers for Disease Control and Prevention  
1600 Clifton Road  
Atlanta, GA 30329

Dear Director Redfield,

We write to express our concerns regarding the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's (CDC) current method of determining the official U.S. COVID-19 death toll. Families across the nation are grappling with the gaping hole caused by COVID-19, and communities are struggling to get back on their feet. However, our government must ensure that the American people and their elected leaders have accurate statistics, not artificially inflated death tolls, as they make important public policy decisions, including when and how to reopen.

Recent reports lead us to believe that the CDC's criteria for determining COVID-19 death tolls invites confusion and may invite artificially higher death statistics. This artificial inflation may be occurring as a direct result of the CDC's guidance to include any death of an individual who tested positive for COVID-19, whether the virus was the primary cause of death or not.

As evidence, the Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment (CDPHE) issued a revised death toll last week after reports emerged that a Coloradan who tested positive for COVID-19 but died as a direct result of ingesting twice the lethal limit of alcohol, was counted in the state's official COVID-19 death tally. As expected, Colorado's death toll dropped from 1150 to 878 total deaths, approximately a 23 percent reduction, after state officials altered the state's method for counting COVID-19 deaths to only include individuals who passed away as a direct result of the virus.

Colorado's example raises serious questions about the accuracy of state and national COVID-19 death tallies. These inconsistencies also raise concerns that our political leaders are attempting to make important public policy decisions based on potentially inaccurate, artificially inflated information. As such, we urge the CDC to issue new guidance that ensures state and federal public health entities follow Colorado's lead by ensuring official death tallies only include deaths that are directly related to COVID-19. Thank you in advance for your attention and prompt action to address this glaring problem.

Sincerely,



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Ken Buck  
Member of Congress



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Andy Biggs  
Member of Congress



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Ralph Norman  
Member of Congress



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Thomas Massie  
Member of Congress



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Andy Harris, M.D.  
Member of Congress



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Steve King  
Member of Congress



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Scott Perry  
Member of Congress



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Glenn "GT" Thompson  
Member of Congress



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Paul A. Gosar, D.D.S.  
Member of Congress



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Bill Posey  
Member of Congress



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Ted Budd  
Member of Congress



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Ron Wright  
Member of Congress



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Jody Hice  
Member of Congress



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Russ Fulcher  
Member of Congress



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Chip Roy  
Member of Congress



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Louie Gohmert  
Member of Congress