



THE SECRETARY OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20201

MAR 05 2019

The Honorable Rosa DeLauro
Chairwoman
Subcommittee on Labor, Health and
Human Services, Education and Related Agencies
Committee on Appropriations
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Madam Chairwoman:

I am writing to provide notification that the Department of Health and Human Services' (HHS) plans to reallocate up to \$385 million in Fiscal Year (FY) 2019 funding for the Unaccompanied Alien Children (UAC) Program.

The UAC Program, operated by the Office of Refugee Resettlement (ORR), is required to provide care, food, shelter, and services to UAC in ORR custody before release to a suitable sponsor, usually a parent or close relative. While the number of UAC in HHS shelters decreased recently due to intensive case management efforts by ORR, it remains high by historical standards, and existing shelter capacity is nearly full. As in the past, the overwhelming number of UAC in ORR care are children traveling across the border into our country on their own without a parent.

Referrals from southern border crossings continue to increase significantly and are projected to increase to historic levels. In January 2019, referrals were 4,490, 45 percent higher than the 3,107 referrals in January 2018. Similarly, in February 2019, referrals were 6,546, or nearly a 120 percent increase over the February 2018 total of 2,984 referrals. Given historical seasonal patterns, we expect UAC referrals to continue to increase materially over the next few months. Based on this anticipated growth pattern, HHS is preparing for the need for high bed capacity to continue.

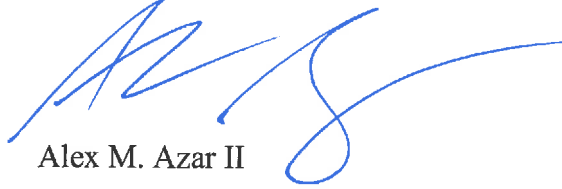
As a result, I plan to reallocate additional resources for the UAC Program. This reallocation includes a Secretary's Transfer of up to \$286 million and an up to \$99 million reprogramming of refugee funding within the ORR. These resources will allow the program to increase shelter capacity and meet its statutory duty to provide shelter to all unaccompanied alien children referred to HHS for care.

The Honorable Rosa DeLauro

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I appreciate your continued interest and support of these activities. Identical letters have been sent to Representative Tom Cole, Senator Roy Blunt, and Senator Patty Murray.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Alex M. Azar II', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Alex M. Azar II

Enclosure