**Letter to government**

*Government officials can best serve their constituents if they are aware of their constituents’ concerns and needs. One way to elevate the importance of epidemic preparedness in the eyes of government officials, and catalyze policy changes that keep our community safe from disease outbreaks and other health threats, is to send them an email or letter. You can find contact details for various government entities, including your country’s Ministry of Health, which plays a leading role in epidemic preparedness, at* [*www.PreventEpidemics.org*](http://www.PreventEpidemics.org)*: Just search for your country, click on the Take Action button and scroll down. Below is a template letter for you to adapt and send to your Ministry of Health or other government representatives:*

I have been alarmed by all the headlines in recent years about Ebola, bird flu and other epidemic diseases. The message is clear: It’s not a question of “if” but “when” we will face the next, potentially devastating, outbreak – and it could happen right here at home.

As you know, global health experts have developed a framework to prevent this from happening, and [add the name of your country here] is one of 194 countries bound by this framework, called the International Health Regulations (IHR).

I call on this administration to make sure that the IHR are fully implemented.

Through the IHRs (2005), countries have agreed to build their capacities to detect, assess and report public health events. We have taken an important first step by assessing our preparedness capabilities through a voluntary Joint External Evaluation (JEE) with the World Health Organization. I urge you to act swiftly now to craft a national action plan that fills identified preparedness gaps.

Gaps include:

[You can explore epidemic preparedness gaps by visiting www.PreventEpidemics.org and using the website’s search function to find the country you are interested in. Once you are on the country’s dedicated page, scroll down and you will find several bullet points under the headline “Gaps.” Copy these bullet points here.]

A robust, fully funded and implemented plan is essential to find, stop and prevent health threats and minimize the impact of disease outbreaks on the country we love. Not only will these investments in health security save precious lives, but they will also save money – as it is cheaper for us to stay healthy than to get treated for disease.

I am counting on you to keep me and my loved ones safe.