

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

March 24, 2023

The Honorable Robert Aderholt
Chairman
Appropriations Subcommittee on Labor,
Health and Human Services, Education, and
Related Agencies
United States House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Rosa DeLauro
Ranking Member
Appropriations Subcommittee on Labor,
Health and Human Services, Education, and
Related Agencies
United States House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Chair Aderholt and Ranking Member DeLauro,

As the Committee begins to draft its Fiscal Year (FY) 2024 Labor, Health, Human Services, and Related Agencies Appropriations funding bill, we respectfully request that you include funding and report language to provide a total of \$167.5 million for the Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA) to support Long COVID research initiatives and deliver immediate care to those living with Long COVID.

Long COVID, also referred to as post-COVID conditions and Post-Acute Sequelae of SARS CoV-2 infection (PASC), is a serious illness that can affect the function of multiple organs months after a person contracts COVID-19. Long COVID affects people of all ages and all walks of life, with disproportionate impacts on women and people of color. According to the CDC, nearly one in five adults who have had COVID-19 are still suffering from Long COVID symptoms.¹ Due to its debilitating effects, the Department of Health and Human Services and the Department of Justice have classified the condition as a disability under the Americans with Disabilities Act, Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, and Section 1557 of the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act.²

As part of the initial federal response to Long COVID, the National Institutes of Health launched the Researching COVID-19 to Enhance Recovery (RECOVER) Initiative to improve our understanding and ability to prevent and treat Long COVID. In the time since, the RECOVER Initiative has identified a network of enrollment sites to work with community partners in collecting clinical tests and characteristics from the Long COVID population, which will ultimately inform the administration of clinical trials.

The RECOVER Initiative is an important first step in fighting Long COVID, and Congress should further leverage this initial investment by providing \$37.5 million for HRSA to competitively select Long COVID Centers of Excellence that disseminate data, educate and train providers, perform outreach to affected populations, and coordinate access to care. These Long COVID Centers would provide the capacity for health care providers, patients and their

¹ *Nearly One in Five American Adults Who Have Had COVID-19 Still Have “Long COVID,”* National Center for Health Statistics (June 22, 2022), www.cdc.gov/nchs/pressroom/nchs_press_releases/2022/20220622.htm.

² *Guidance on “Long COVID” as a Disability Under the ADA, Section 504, and Section 1557,* U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (July 26, 2021), www.hhs.gov/civil-rights/for-providers/civilrightscovid19/guidance-long-covid-disability/index.html.

caregivers, and other community stakeholders to learn about, adapt, and implement interventions, therapeutics, and other best practices to combatting this illness.

We appreciate the efforts that Congress has taken towards investing in the research needed to understand Long COVID and identify effective treatments. However, those suffering from Long COVID need care today. There is currently no federal program focused on expanding treatment options for this unique and growing population. The absence of specialized support contributes to patients experiencing greater physical and mental anguish, disruption in employment and education, and reduced quality of life. Providing \$100 million in funding to the establishment and expansion of Long COVID Clinics, as well as \$30 million to support provider training, capacity, and consultation, would ensure that these individuals have access to the quality, multi-disciplinary care and treatment that they need and deserve.

There is no version of a just and equitable recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic that does not include the Long COVID community. These investments would deliver life-saving and life-changing care to the millions of people suffering from this debilitating disease. We thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,



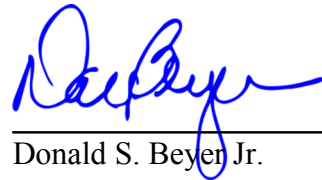
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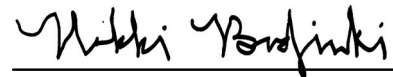
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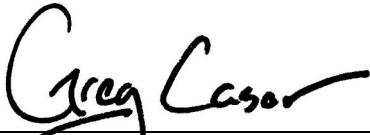
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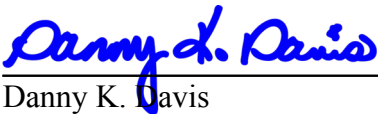
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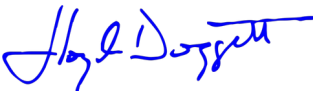
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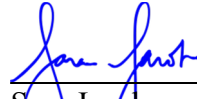
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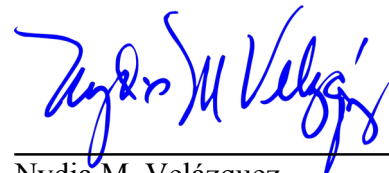
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