

## Targeting Resources for Equitable Access to Treatment for Long COVID (TREAT Long COVID) Act

### BACKGROUND

Over the course of the pandemic, millions who had COVID-19 have been suffering from the prolonged health impacts known as Long COVID. According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), people with Long COVID and its associated conditions may experience a combination of symptoms, ranging from extreme fatigue and cognitive dysfunction to muscle pain and gastrointestinal issues, to difficulty breathing, insomnia, and heart palpitations.<sup>1</sup> Across the country, nearly one in five adults who have had COVID-19 still suffer from symptoms of Long COVID.<sup>2</sup> These complications affect people of all ages and all walks of life, with disproportionate impacts on women and people of color.

People battling Long COVID and its associated conditions require and deserve accessible and affordable medical care and treatment. Currently, there is no federal program focused on expanding treatment options for this 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.

The TREAT Long COVID Act is much needed legislation that will direct the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) to provide dedicated grant resources for the expansion of Long COVID Clinics. These grants will empower health care providers, including community health centers, rural health clinics, Indian Health Service, and state and local public health departments, to treat patients in their own communities who are struggling with Long COVID and its associated conditions.

### The TREAT Long COVID Act:

- Authorizes HHS to award grants up to \$2,000,000 to health care providers, including community health centers;
- Grants funding for the creation and expansion of multidisciplinary Long COVID clinics to address the physical and mental health needs of patients;
- Prioritizes funding for health providers that plan to engage Long COVID patient organizations, medically underserved populations, and populations disproportionately impacted by COVID-19;
- Ensures that treatment is not denied based on insurance coverage, date or method of diagnosis, preexisting conditions, or previous hospitalization;
- Encourages ongoing medical training for physicians in Long COVID Clinics and other health care workers serving patients; and
- Requires grantees to submit an annual report on its activities that includes evaluations from patients.

<sup>1</sup> *Long Covid*, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (Dec. 2022), [cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/long-term-effects/index.html](https://cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/long-term-effects/index.html).

<sup>2</sup> *Nearly One in Five American Adults Who Have Had COVID-19 Still Have “Long COVID”*, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (June 2022), [cdc.gov/nchs/pressroom/nchs\\_press\\_releases/2022/20220622.htm](https://cdc.gov/nchs/pressroom/nchs_press_releases/2022/20220622.htm).