

March 30, 2020

The Honorable Richard Shelby
Chairman
Committee on Appropriations
U.S. Senate
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Patrick Leahy
Vice Chairman
Committee on Appropriations
U.S. Senate
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Roy Blunt
Chairman
Subcommittee on Labor, HHS, Education
Committee on Appropriations
U.S. Senate
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Patty Murray
Ranking Member
Subcommittee on Labor, HHS, Education
Committee on Appropriations
U.S. Senate
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Chairman Shelby, Vice Chairman Leahy, Chairman Blunt and Ranking Member Murray:

We, the undersigned organizations representing millions of individuals working to address the unprecedented challenges SARS-COV-2 has presented to our society, our healthcare system, and our economy, are committed to working with Congress and the Administration to address the pressing needs associated with the novel coronavirus (SARS-COV-2) and COVID-19.

We are writing to request that, as soon as the immediate public health emergency subsides, Congress and the Administration initiate a high-level, comprehensive review of the COVID-19 response through either a federal commission or a qualified, nonpartisan entity such as the National Academies of Science, Engineering, and Medicine. This process should also be forward-looking and make cross-cutting recommendations on how the United States can better prepare for future public health emergencies, including funding needs and policy changes. By fully understanding what went well and what did not during this most recent pandemic, we can help thwart, or at the very least minimize, the effects of the next pandemic.

Specifically, such a review should recommend the most effective ways to:

- Ensure coordination and collaboration across and amongst federal agencies and with state and local authorities;
- Clearly and effectively communicate practical, science-based information and guidance to stakeholder entities and to the public;
- Build public health capacity, including at the local, state and tribal health department levels;
- Rapidly scale up laboratory testing capacity in order to get tests to those who need them;
- Ensure a steady supply chain of materials to labs, clinics, hospitals and workplaces to mitigate shortages;
- Protect the most vulnerable in our communities by reducing patient access barriers to testing and health care services; and,
- Facilitate global collaboration to ensure that responses are based on real-time, accurate information.

The current crisis has brought to light a number of barriers, challenges and shortcomings in our ability to handle a public health emergency. Some of these were the results of “real-time” decision-making, while others exposed systemic breakdowns that were years – if not decades – in the making. These cut across multiple agencies and span levels of government from federal, to state, to local authorities.

While public health professionals, health departments, clinical laboratories, clinics and hospitals have the most immediate connection to the current crisis, a comprehensive, well-planned approach will be critical to a long-term strategy to head off future pandemics. A comprehensive approach includes medical research and development, social, behavioral and economic considerations, corporate partners to ensure product and service delivery, small businesses, universities and research institutions, as well as healthcare professions.

We stand ready to work with you to help improve the systems we have in place today, and to develop the solutions that will help address tomorrow’s challenges.

Sincerely,

1,000 Days

AABB

American Academy of Pediatrics

American Association for Clinical Chemistry

American Association for the Advancement of Science

American Association of Colleges of Pharmacy

American Association of Immunologists

American Institute for Medical and Biological Engineering

American Public Health Association

American Society for Clinical Pathology

American Society for Microbiology

American Society for Nutrition

American Society for Pharmacology and Experimental Therapeutics

American Society for Virology

American Society of Hematology

American Society of Tropical Medicine and Hygiene

Association for Professionals in Infection Control and Epidemiology

Association of American Cancer Institutes

Association of American Universities

Association of Maternal & Child Health Programs

Association of Population Centers

Association of Public Health Laboratories

Association of Public and Land-grant Universities

Biophysical Society

Coalition for the Life Sciences

Federation of Associations in Behavioral & Brain Sciences

Foundation for Vaccine Research

Global Health Technologies Coalition

Infectious Diseases Society of America

National Association of County and City Health Officials

National Safety Council

OSA, The Optical Society
Population Association of America
Research!America
Society of Infectious Diseases Pharmacists
Susan G. Komen
The Society for Healthcare Epidemiology of America
Trust for America's Health
Vaccinate Your Family