

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:

- x Ensure coordination and collaboration across and among federal agencies and with state and local authorities;
- x Clearly and effectively communicate practical, science-based information and guidance to stakeholder entities and to the public;
- x Build public health capacity, including at the local, state and tribal health department levels;
- x Rapidly scale up laboratory testing capacity in order to get tests to those who need them;
- x Ensure a steady supply chain of materials to labs, clinics, hospitals, workplaces to mitigate shortages;
- x Protect the most vulnerable in our communities by reducing patient access to testing and health care services; and,
- x Facilitate global collaboration to ensure that responses are based on timely, 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 “realtime” decisionmaking, while others exposed systemic breakdowns that were years or decades in the making. These cut across multiple agencies and span levels of government from federal, to state, to local authorities.

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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