

April 9, 2020

The Honorable Nancy Pelosi, Speaker  
United States House of Representatives  
1236 Longworth House Office Building  
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Mitch McConnell, Leader  
United States Senate  
317 Russell Senate Office Building  
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Kevin McCarthy, Leader  
United States House of Representatives  
2468 Rayburn House Office Building  
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Charles Schumer, Leader  
United States Senate  
322 Hart Senate Office Building  
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Speaker Pelosi and Leaders McConnell, Schumer, and McCarthy,

The 162 undersigned organizations, representing millions of patients and consumers from across America, urge Congress to expand eligibility for the paid family and medical leave program to include individuals determined by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) to be at high risk for adverse complications from COVID-19 and working members of their households. This policy will allow those at highest risk to remain home for the duration of the COVID-19 pandemic and will help ensure their health and safety.

Currently, paid family medical leave provides support only to those with children or adults with disabilities whose local school district or usual care providers are closed due to the pandemic. This policy does not go far enough. The hardworking Americans who have been advised by the CDC to remain home are only eligible for up to two weeks of financial support and job protection of expanded paid sick leave. This places individuals who live with significant health conditions such as cystic fibrosis, cancer, diabetes, heart disease, organ transplants, sickle cell and others with a devastating choice: place their health or their loved one's health at risk by going back to work or lose their jobs altogether. Additionally, adults living with family members who are immunocompromised also need access to this support to help protect these vulnerable Americans.

At this time of great uncertainty in our country, it is important to understand that certain individuals are at much higher risk of adverse health events and death associated with COVID-19 than the rest of the population. Although recent research indicates the overall fatality rate from COVID-19 is around 2 percent, individuals with certain health conditions experience a greater rate of severe complications and have higher fatality rates from COVID-19. Research performed by the European Respiratory Society found that<sup>i</sup>:

- patients with chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD) have a 25 percent fatality rate
- patients with diabetes have a 10 percent fatality rate
- patients with hypertension have a 10.4 percent fatality rate
- patients with cerebrovascular disease have a 20 percent fatality rate

Further, researchers at Johns Hopkins University have found that patients with cancer have a 5.6 percent fatality rate and those with cardiovascular disease have a 10.5 percent fatality rate.<sup>ii</sup>

These very startling statistics demonstrate why individuals with serious health conditions and other risk factors, as identified by the CDC, and working members of their household should receive job protection

and financial support through paid family leave. We call on Congress to make the following changes to the paid family and medical leave program created in the Families First Coronavirus Response Act:

- Expand eligibility for paid family leave to include anyone who, because of a serious health condition that places them at grave risk from COVID-19, has been advised by their physician to remain home
- Expand eligibility for paid family leave or additional financial support to include anyone who has been advised by a physician to remain home because there is a member of their household who has a serious health condition that places them at grave risk from COVID-19
- Remove the arbitrary time limit on paid leave to ensure that these individuals can remain home as long as the COVID-19 pandemic poses a risk to their health and wellbeing
- Ensure this program applies to employers of all sizes

In this extremely uncertain time for our country, we believe Congress can come together to provide some certainty for Americans who are afraid that their health or the health of a loved one will be placed at risk should they continue to work. We urge Congress to act swiftly to enact these changes.

Sincerely,

Cystic Fibrosis Foundation	Caregiver Action Network
Academy of Oncology Nurse and Patient Navigators	CARES Foundation Inc.
ACCSES	Center for Independence of the Disabled, NY
Allergy & Asthma Network	Children's Cancer Cause
ALS Association	Christopher & Dana Reeve Foundation
Alstrom Syndrome International	Chronic Care Policy Alliance
American Association on Health and Disability	Chronic Disease Coalition
American Autoimmune Related Diseases Association	Coelho Center for Disability Law, Policy and Innovation
American Diabetes Association	CommunicationFIRST
American Foundation for Suicide Prevention	Congenital Hyperinsulinism International
American Kidney Fund	COPD Foundation
American Liver Foundation	Crohn's & Colitis Foundation
Angioma Alliance	Cure HHT
Association for Education and Rehabilitation of the Blind and Visually Impaired	Cure SMA
Association of Oncology Social Work (AOSW)	CureDuchenne
Asthma and Allergy Foundation of America	Cystic Fibrosis Foundation
Autistic Self Advocacy Network	Cystic Fibrosis Research, Inc. (CFRI)
Autistic Women and Nonbinary Network	Danielle Byron Henry Migraine Foundation
Axis Advocacy	Davis Phinney Foundation
Beyond Type 1	Depression and Bipolar Support Alliance
Brain Injury Association of America	Diabetes Patient Advocacy Coalition (DPAC)
Bridge the Gap - SYNGAP Education and Research Foundation	Disability Rights California
California Access Coalition	Disability Rights Education & Defense Fund
California Chronic Care Coalition	Division for Early Childhood of the Council for Exceptional Children
Cancer Support Community	Dystonia Advocacy Network

Dystonia Medical Research Foundation  
 Epilepsy Foundation  
 Family Values @ Work  
 Family Voices  
 Family Voices NJ  
 Fight Colorectal Cancer  
 GBS|CIDP Foundation International  
 Genetic Alliance  
 Global Healthy Living Foundation  
 Global Liver Institute  
 GO2 Foundation for Lung Cancer  
 Good Days  
 Gould Syndrome Foundation  
 Health Hats  
 Heart Valve Voice US  
 Hemophilia Federation of America  
 Hope Charities  
 HPV Alliance  
 Hydrocephalus Association  
 International Foundation for AiArthritis  
 International Foundation for Gastrointestinal Disorders  
 International Pemphigus Pemphigoid Foundation  
 Interstitial Cystitis Association  
 Lakeshore Foundation  
 Leukemia & Lymphoma Society  
 Lewy Body Dementia Association  
 Livpact  
 Lupus and Allied Diseases Association, Inc.  
 Lupus Foundation of America  
 Lymphangiomatosis & Gorham's Disease Alliance  
 Lymphatic Education & Research Network  
 March of Dimes  
 Mental Health America  
 Mesothelioma Applied Research Foundation  
 METAvivor  
 MLD Foundation  
 Multiple Sclerosis Association of America  
 Muscular Dystrophy Association  
 NAACP New York State Conference  
 NASTAD  
 National Alliance for Caregiving  
 National Alliance for Hispanic Health  
 National Alliance on Mental Illness  
 National Alopecia Areata Foundation  
 National Association of Councils on Developmental Disabilities  
 National Association of State Head Injury Administrators  
 National Center for Learning Disabilities  
 National Coalition for Cancer Survivorship  
 National Diabetes Volunteer Leadership Council  
 National Down Syndrome Congress  
 National Fabry Disease Foundation  
 National Health Council  
 National Health Law Program  
 National Hemophilia Foundation  
 National Kidney Foundation  
 National MPS Society  
 National Multiple Sclerosis Society  
 National Organization for Rare Disorders  
 National Pancreas Foundation  
 National Partnership for Women & Families  
 National Patient Advocate Foundation  
 National Urea Cycle Disorders Foundation  
 NBIA Disorders Association  
 NephCure Kidney International  
 New York State Sickle Cell Advocacy Network, INC, (NYS.SCAN)  
 Organic Acidemia Association  
 Paid Leave for the United States (PL+US)  
 Patient Advisor  
 Preventive Cardiovascular Nurses Association  
 Project Sleep  
 PTEN Hamartoma Tumor Syndrome Foundation  
 PTEN World  
 Pulmonary Fibrosis Foundation  
 Pulmonary Hypertension Association  
 PXE International  
 RespectAbility  
 Restless Legs Syndrome Foundation  
 SCID Angels for Life Foundation  
 Scleroderma Foundation  
 Sickle Cell Thalassemia Patients Network (SCTPN)  
 Siegel Rare Neuroimmune Association  
 Sjogren's Foundation  
 Solve ME/CFS Initiative  
 Spina Bifida Association  
 Susan G. Komen  
 TASH  
 The AIDS Institute  
 The American Liver Foundation  
 The Arc of the United States  
 The Bonnell Foundation: Living with cystic fibrosis

The Coelho Center for Disability Law, Policy and Innovation  
The Headache and Migraine Policy Forum  
The Huntington's Disease Society of America  
The Marfan Foundation  
The Michael J. Fox Foundation for Parkinson's Research  
The Migraine Diva  
The Sickle Cell Disease Association of America, Inc  
TNT Brand Strategist LLC  
Tourette Association of America  
Transplant Recipients International Organization (TRIO)  
Transplant Support Organization (TRO)  
Tuberous Sclerosis Alliance  
U.S. International Council on Disabilities  
United Cerebral Palsy National  
United for Charitable Assistance  
United Spinal Association  
US Hereditary Angioedema Association  
Vermont Family Network  
VetsFirst  
VHL Alliance  
Whistleblowers of America  
WomenHeart: The National Coalition for Women with Heart Disease  
ZERO - The End of Prostate Cancer

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<sup>i</sup> <https://erj.ersjournals.com/content/early/2020/03/17/13993003.00547-2020.figures-only>

<sup>ii</sup>

[https://www.hopkinsguides.com/hopkins/view/Johns\\_Hopkins\\_ABX\\_Guide/540747/all/Coronavirus\\_COVID\\_19\\_\\_SARS\\_CoV\\_2\\_](https://www.hopkinsguides.com/hopkins/view/Johns_Hopkins_ABX_Guide/540747/all/Coronavirus_COVID_19__SARS_CoV_2_)