

April 23, 2024

The Honorable Bernard Sanders  
Chair  
Committee on Health, Education, Labor and Pensions  
United States Senate  
Washington, DC 20510

Chair Sanders,

On behalf of the National Association of County and City Health Officials (NACCHO) and the over 3,300 local health departments across the country, thank you for the opportunity to provide input on the draft legislative proposal on Long COVID. As you know, local health officials and staff were on the front lines of the COVID-19 pandemic response. We appreciate the Senate HELP Committee's ongoing work to address this critical public health issue. NACCHO respectfully offers the following comments on the legislative proposal.

### **Establish Research Advisory Board**

NACCHO is pleased to see additional research interest into the impact of Long COVID. In order to ensure that the research agenda is rooted in real-world practice, we strongly recommend including public health professionals—including a representative who currently works in a local public health department—on the research advisory board. The perspective of practicing governmental public health professionals would particularly be important on any efforts to increase awareness of Long-COVID and convey to the public and other stakeholders any new information that emerges from these research efforts. With the increased prevalence of health misinformation, trusted public health messengers are vital to addressing Long COVID.

### **Establish Data Systems & Information Hub**

A Long COVID surveillance strategy and Long COVID Information Hub should be developed in collaboration with the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) who can ensure the dissemination and information to state, territorial, local, and tribal health departments in addition to health professionals and patients. Inclusion of the governmental public health system is a critical component of communicating with the public and ensuring high quality data and will ensure help public health COVID-19-related activities are informed by timely data.



## Public Education and Outreach Campaign

NACCHO appreciates the inclusion of local health departments in the development of a public education campaign for materials for patients, families, and caregivers of the risks of developing Long COVID. In addition to better treating and understanding Long COVID, we also suggest prioritizing educational efforts on Long COVID prevention. Research suggests that people who get a COVID-19 infection after vaccination are less likely to report Long COVID, compared to people who are unvaccinated.<sup>1</sup> CDC is actively working to better understand the role vaccination plays in preventing Long COVID.

While we are glad to see the Committee consider grants directly to health departments to reach populations most affected by Long COVID and COVID-19, we know that federal funds granted to states have varying reach to local communities. The legislation should ensure that at least 40% of grants are designated specifically for local health department efforts.

We are grateful for your ongoing work on this important issue and the opportunity to provide input. Should you have any questions about this response or wish to engage in further discussion, please reach out to Adriane Casalotti, NACCHO's Chief of Government and Public Affairs, at [@acasalotti@naccho.org](mailto:@acasalotti@naccho.org).

Sincerely,



Lori Tremmel Freeman, MBA  
Chief Executive Officer

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<sup>1</sup> [Long COVID or Post-COVID Conditions | CDC](#)

