



The Honorable Nancy Pelosi
Speaker
United States House of Representative
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Chuck Schumer
Majority Leader
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Kevin McCarthy
Republican Leader
United States House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Mitch McConnell
Republican Leader
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

April 21, 2022

Dear Majority Leader Schumer, Minority Leader McConnell, Speaker Pelosi and Minority Leader McCarthy:

On behalf of the Infectious Diseases Society of America (IDSA), HIV Medicine Association (HIVMA), Society for Healthcare Epidemiology of America (SHEA), Pediatric Infectious Diseases Society (PIDS) and Society of Infectious Diseases Pharmacists (SIDP), we strongly urge you to pass an emergency supplemental bill to support the COVID-19 response as soon as possible.

We support the bipartisan \$10 billion emergency supplemental funding bill announced earlier this month, though we emphasize that additional resources will be needed. Additional resources are required to ensure individuals in low- and middle-income countries can access COVID-19 vaccines. As this is a global pandemic, we will not be safe until everyone is safe. The U.S. has a responsibility to the world and our own citizens to lead the global vaccination effort.

As COVID-19 cases begin to increase in several states, we are relying heavily upon therapeutics and vaccines to prevent severe disease and death, and to keep our hospitals from becoming overwhelmed again. We have exhausted funding to purchase additional monoclonal antibody treatments and oral antiviral treatments. If we fail to commit to purchases now, manufacturing of these therapies that have been in short supply will be scaled back, leading to long production delays in the near future. As a result, Americans who are immunocompromised, have underlying conditions that place them at greater risk for severe COVID-19 disease and those who remain unvaccinated could experience critical lapses in protection. Individuals without health care coverage will face the greatest challenges in accessing treatment, increasing the already glaring health disparities we have seen throughout the pandemic.

Testing capacity is also critical to help identify individuals eligible for treatment early and to prevent spread of infection. By June 2022, funding for testing is expected to be insufficient to maintain domestic manufacturing, leaving our country with diminished testing capacity while many Americans continue to rely upon testing, in combination with vaccination and other tools, to allow them to work, travel and gather safely.

The recent Food and Drug Administration authorization of a second booster dose for individuals over 50 further underscores the need to secure funding that ensures all eligible individuals have access to COVID-19 vaccines. Funds to vaccinate uninsured individuals have run out, which threatens to widen the already significant disparity in COVID-19 infections, outcomes and access to care. In addition, we need resources to reach individuals who have not yet received their primary vaccine series or first boosters.

New variants are likely to continue to emerge until we dramatically reduce COVID-19 transmission around the globe. We need resources to accelerate development of next-generation COVID-19 vaccines that can provide broad and longer-lasting protection against a range of variants. New and improved vaccines can also reduce costs overall, while easing distribution and administration through increased manufacturing yields and longer shelf life.

We also recognize that vaccinating only Americans is not enough to end this pandemic. Infectious diseases do not respect national borders, and we must fulfill our commitment to vaccinate the world in order to protect our citizens. USAID, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, and other agencies working on the global response have run out of the resources they need to distribute millions of doses of vaccines already purchased. In addition to purchasing and donating vaccine doses, more resources are needed to scale up vaccine administration in low-resource settings around the world.

Our history with this virus suggests that we may again see COVID-19 surges in the fall and winter. We remember with dismay our inadequate preparedness for the Omicron surge — long lines for testing, overcrowded health care facilities and preventable deaths. If we prepare now, we can have the necessary tools to mitigate future surges by preventing severe illness and death, keeping hospitals from becoming overwhelmed, maintaining safe in-person learning and allowing individuals to safely engage in activities with friends and loved ones.

We urge Congress to act to meet immediate vaccination and response needs and to ensure we are not caught unprepared again.

Sincerely,



Daniel P. McQuillen, MD, FIDSA
President, IDSA



Marwan Haddad, MD, MPH
Chair, HIVMA

Handwritten signature of Buddy Creech in blue ink.

Buddy Creech, MD, MPH
President, PIDS

Handwritten signature of Margo S. Farber in grey ink.

Margo S. Farber, Pharm. D
Executive Director
Society of Infectious Diseases Pharmacists

Handwritten signature of Sharon B. Wright in black ink.

Sharon B. Wright, MD, MPH, FIDSA, FSHEA
President, SHEA