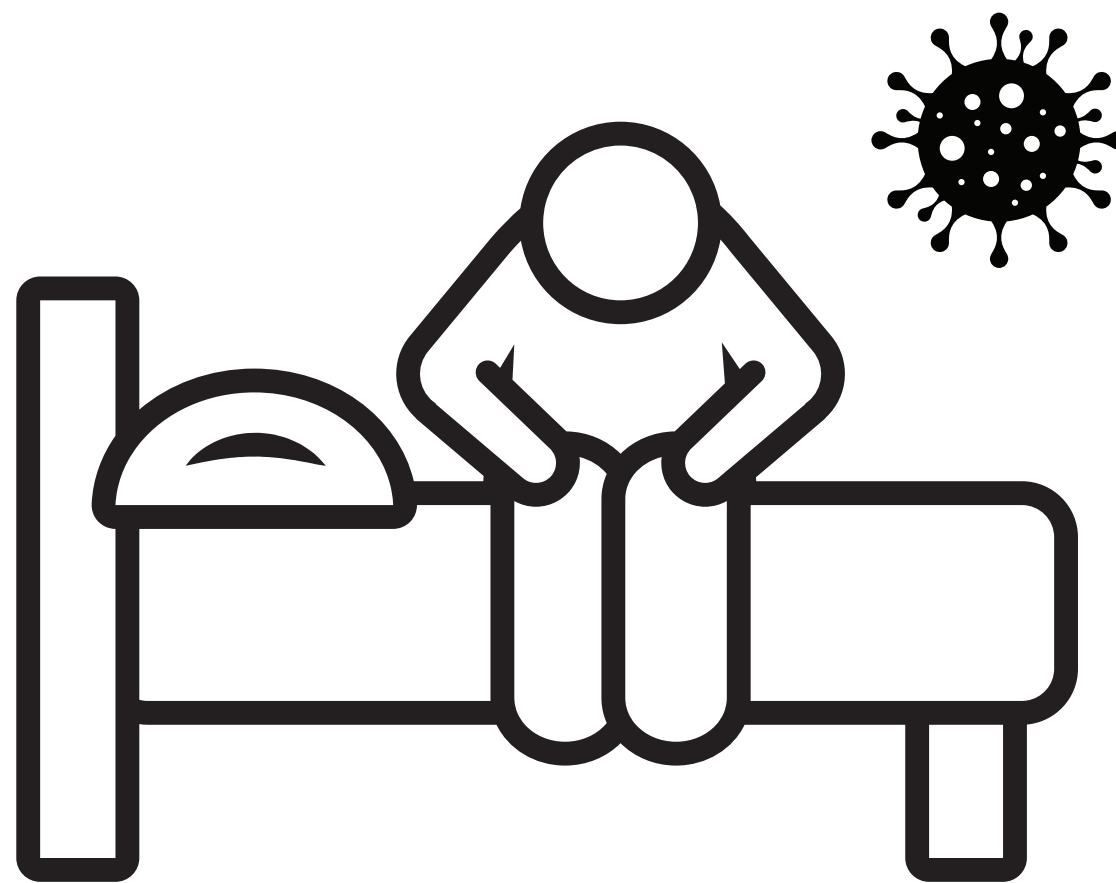


President Biden and Congress:
America needs a comprehensive national plan
to meet and defeat the Long COVID crisis.



Millions of Americans have survived COVID-19. Months later, many still struggle to get out of bed.

Three to 10 million are continuing to suffer from a range of debilitating conditions which may persist for months – even after they’ve recovered from the initial virus infection. “Long COVID” symptoms – including neurological challenges, cognitive problems such as brain fog, shortness of breath, fatigue, pain, and mobility issues – can prevent some patients from walking under their own power, let alone climbing a flight of stairs.

These patients are hurting. And so is our economy. Getting them back to health, and back to work, is essential for America.

Long COVID has no easy solutions.

The best medical minds at NIH, WHO and the CDC are working to understand why some patients suffer from Long COVID and others don’t. Specialized clinics dedicated to treating Long COVID cases have begun opening in select areas of the country. Some progress has been made, but millions of Long COVID patients need a coordinated way to access care. These patients continue to suffer and their population is growing. We have an opportunity right now to avert the next crisis of the pandemic.

Urgently needed: a national crisis management plan that surrounds and coordinates all aspects of our Long COVID response.

America can solve and defeat the Long COVID threat. But this effort can’t succeed without marshalling all resources in a coordinated national plan. Such a program needs to provide a care infrastructure on many levels, all working in lock step.

A comprehensive national plan should include: Resources to build necessary infrastructure.

- Rehabilitation care infrastructure and funding to meet this crisis.
- Resources for local health systems for the necessary facilities and supplies to support patients and provide expert care.
- Appropriate reimbursement for care.

Equitable access to care for patients.

- Timely and local access to multidisciplinary care.
- Address inequities in the U.S. healthcare system that result in diminished access to sustained quality care because of racial, ethnic, or socioeconomic factors.
- Access for patients who do not recover quickly to strengthened safety-net care, including disability evaluation and benefits.

Research to advance medical understanding of Long COVID.

- Congress has funded research of Post-Acute Sequelae of SARS-CoV-2 infection (PASC), and the NIH, WHO and CDC are working to advance our understanding of Long COVID-related issues. This is applaudable, and the effort must continue.
- As research is conducted, results are needed in real-time to support providers in rapidly developing best practices for care.

Immediate action is needed to create and execute a comprehensive national plan to care for patients with Long COVID.

President Biden and Congress: America broke records with its incredibly rapid response developing and implementing COVID-19 vaccines. Now we’re facing a Long COVID threat that confirms our COVID fight is far from over. We urge you to prioritize federal attention, working in concert with state and local resources and our healthcare agencies and institutions, to draw up a plan that makes comprehensive care accessible to every patient with Long COVID – and gets each patient back to their highest levels of recovery, as quickly as we can.

aapm&r

American Academy of
Physical Medicine and Rehabilitation

www.aapmr.org