

April 30, 2020

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

The Honorable Nancy Pelosi
Speaker of the House
United States House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20515

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

The Honorable Kevin McCarthy
Minority Leader
United States House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20515

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

On behalf of the American Thoracic Society (ATS), I am writing to urge Congress to address urgent needs in the U.S. scientific and biomedical research system in the next COVID-19 economic relief package. The ATS is a multi-disciplinary society of 16,000 pulmonary, critical care and sleep specialists who are on the frontlines of the COVID-19 pandemic treating individuals and conducting vital scientific research to develop diagnostics, treatments, and prevention interventions for this respiratory disease. The ATS urges Congress to provide \$31 billion in funding to expand COVID-19 related research, support biomedical research grant and contract supplements through NIH and other federal agencies, research facility operating costs and personnel and additional postdoctoral fellowships and other research training positions in the next COVID-19 response package.

Specific to COVID-19 research efforts, the ATS recommends that Congress ensure funding for the NIH to rapidly respond to fast-moving diseases by providing accelerated funding mechanisms for short and long-term research projects in areas of clear translational potential including virulence and epidemiology, vaccine and other therapies development, diagnostic tests and training for healthcare workers and researchers.

While the biomedical research community is focusing on COVID-19-related research, other critical research has been slowed or halted completely due to academic center and laboratory closures. This includes studies to develop needed treatments and cures for top respiratory and critical illness killers including COPD, pneumonia and sepsis, and research investigating the environmental influences that cause these and other chronic diseases. The ATS is deeply concerned about the long-term impacts on the U.S. biomedical research infrastructure and workforce.

As a result of research pauses, the scientific workforce of investigators, postdoctoral candidates and technical support staff across the U.S. is facing deep uncertainty about the future. Although federal rules

JAMES M. BECK, MD, ATSF
President

JUAN C. CELEDÓN, MD, DrPH, ATSF
President-Elect

POLLY E. PARSONS, MD, ATSF
Immediate Past President

LYNN M. SCHNAPP, MD, ATSF
Vice President

GREGORY P. DOWNEY, MD, ATSF
Secretary-Treasurer

KAREN J. COLLISHAW, MPP, CAE
Executive Director



We help the world breathe®
PULMONARY • CRITICAL CARE • SLEEP

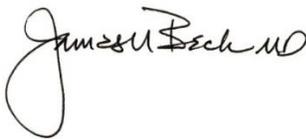
1150 18th Street, N.W., Suite 300
Washington, D.C. 20036 U.S.
T. 202-296-9770 F. 202-296-9776 | thoracic.org

allow continued grant funding during this period, researchers will need supplemental funding to support staff salaries and research facility operations through the fall of 2020.

The ATS is deeply concerned that the education and training of our critical next generation of scientists – postdoctoral fellows and other investigators-in-training - has also been put on hold. We urge Congress to provide critical funding for additional and extended fellowships and research assistantships to ensure that new and early-career investigators around the country complete their education and training and fully transition into the biomedical research workforce. Ensuring a sustainable, highly skilled scientific workforce that can respond to rapidly emerging infectious diseases such as COVID-19 is essential to protecting U.S. public health. In addition, a robust scientific research workforce is critical to our state, local and national economies as research universities, academic medical centers, and national labs are major employers across all 50 states.

The ATS urges Congress to provide \$31 billion in the next COVID-19 package to support accelerated COVID-19 research and U.S. biomedical research infrastructure and workforce. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,



James Beck, MD, ATSF
President
American Thoracic Society

CC:

Sen. Richard Shelby
Chair, Senate Appropriations Committee

Sen. Patrick Leahy
Ranking Member, Senate Appropriations Committee

Rep. Nita Lowey
Chair, House Appropriations Committee

Rep. Kay Granger
Ranking Member, House Appropriations Committee

Sen. Roy Blunt
Chair, Senate L-HHS Appropriations Subcommittee

Sen. Patty Murray,
Ranking Member, Senate L-HHS Appropriations Subcommittee

Rep. Rosa DeLauro
Chair, House L-HHS Appropriations Subcommittee

Rep. Tom Cole
Ranking Member, House L-HHS Appropriations Subcommittee

JAMES M. BECK, MD, ATSF
President

JUAN C. CELEDÓN, MD, DrPH, ATSF
President-Elect

POLLY E. PARSONS, MD, ATSF
Immediate Past President

LYNN M. SCHNAPP, MD, ATSF
Vice President

GREGORY P. DOWNEY, MD, ATSF
Secretary-Treasurer

KAREN J. COLLISHAW, MPP, CAE
Executive Director



We help the world breathe®
PULMONARY • CRITICAL CARE • SLEEP

1150 18th Street, N.W., Suite 300
Washington, D.C. 20036 U.S.
T. 202-296-9770 F. 202-296-9776 | thoracic.org