

Sent to all 435 members of Congress on November 16, 2020

Good afternoon,

We are writing to thank you for your continued work on COVID-19 relief efforts, and to share additional resources on the needs of people with disabilities as the COVID-19 relief and appropriations negotiations continue.

We have long been aware of the disproportionate impact of COVID-19 on the health, livelihoods, and support networks of people with disabilities throughout the pandemic, as reflected in an article published by several members of our network in *The American Journal of Psychiatry*, '[The Impact of COVID-19 on Individuals with Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities: Clinical and Scientific Priorities](#)'. Two studies have since been published with data confirming the toll of COVID-19 on our community:

1. [COVID-19 Mortality Risk in Down Syndrome: Results From a Cohort Study Of 8 Million Adults](#): This study of 8 million individuals with Down syndrome found that people with Down syndrome were four times as likely as people without Down syndrome to be hospitalized for COVID-19 related infection, and 10 times as likely to die of a COVID-19 related death.
2. [Developmental Disabilities Heighten Risk of Covid Death](#): This study of hundreds of thousands of private health insurance claims during the pandemic found that individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities (IDD) are three times as likely as people without IDD to die if they contract COVID-19. People with IDD living in a congregate care setting (e.g., group homes, nursing homes) were found to be at particularly high risk (These findings and implications were summarized in a recent [NYTimes article](#)).

These studies highlight the ongoing and very real risk to individuals with disabilities, their families, and the professionals who support them as COVID-19 cases continue to rise across the country. We urge your boss to support emergency COVID-19 relief funding that prioritizes,

1. Additional funding for Home- and Community-Based Services so that individuals with disabilities can stay in their homes and receive services in the community, as opposed to relying upon care through congregate care settings, which places them at increased risk of contracting and dying from COVID-19.
 - *Action:* \$20 billion to Centers for Medicare and Medicaid, Home and Community Based Services (See Sec. 202 of [S. 3544](#) and Div. C of [H.R.6800](#))
2. Allocated funding for Special Education and early care and intervention services to ensure that children with disabilities can continue to access necessary educational and therapeutic services in a safe and equitable manner consistent with the Individuals with Disabilities in Education Act (IDEA).
 - *Action:* \$12 billion for IDEA sections Part B, Part C, and Section 619 (See Sec. 202 and Sec. 301 of [S.4112](#))
3. Fund the systems that support people with disabilities, especially those with intellectual and developmental disabilities, including UCEDDS and LENDS, that are working tirelessly to try to meet the new and growing needs of disabled Americans in their communities.
 - *Action:*

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- i. \$10 million to Administration for Community Living, Office of Intellectual and Developmental Disability Programs for University Centers for Excellence in Developmental Disabilities Education (UCEDDS) ([P.L. 106-402](#), Subtitle D).
- ii. \$20 million to Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA), Autism and other Developmental Disabilities for Leadership Education in Neurodevelopmental and Related Disabilities programs (LENDs) ([P.L. 116-60](#)).
- iii. \$100 million to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, National Center on Birth Defects and Developmental Disabilities ([NCBDDD](#)) for Disability and Health Programs.

Further information on these asks are attached. Please do not hesitate to reach out should you have questions about the research studies shared or to discuss how best to support the rights and needs of people with disabilities in upcoming COVID-19 relief and/or appropriations legislation. We thank you for all of the hard work of you and your boss, and look forward to continuing our work together.

All the best,

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Schedule a meetingSchedule a meeting

Are the suggestions above helpful?