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September 19, 2022

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

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

Dear Majority Leader Schumer and Minority Leader McConnell,

The American Academy of Neurology (AAN), the world's largest association of neurologists representing 38,000 professionals, is strongly committed to improving the care and outcomes of persons with neurologic illness in a cost-effective manner. One in six people live with a brain or nervous system condition, including Alzheimer's disease, Parkinson's disease, stroke, epilepsy, traumatic brain injury, ALS, multiple sclerosis, muscular dystrophy and headache.

The AAN writes to express our support for H.R. 7180, Brycen Gray and Ben Price COVID-19 Cognitive Research Act. Long COVID impacts up to an estimated 23 million Americans,<sup>1</sup> many of which require neurologic care. We encourage Congress to pass this legislation that will help support interdisciplinary research on the cognitive impact of COVID-19 infections through National Science Foundation grants.

Since 2020, our knowledge of COVID-19 has significantly grown. With science at the forefront of policymaking, synthesizing research to formulate the best path forward is imperative. According to one study, one-third of patients diagnosed with COVID-19 developed psychiatric or neurologic disorders within six months, including depression, anxiety, stroke, and dementia. In that same study, researchers who evaluated more than 230,000 electronic health records, which includes anonymous data from 81 million patients, primarily in the US, found that among COVID-19 patients admitted to an intensive care unit (ICU), the incidence of developing a psychiatric or neurologic disorder rose to an unprecedented 46 percent.<sup>2</sup> Our understanding of the cognitive impact of Long COVID can continue to grow with the passage of this bill.

As we all continue to navigate this new public health environment, we appreciate your focus on supporting research and interdisciplinary responses to Long COVID. The AAN thanks you for working diligently addressing the needs of patients suffering from Long COVID and the physicians providing their care.

If you have any questions or requests for additional information, please contact Derek Brandt, Director of Congressional Affairs at [dbrandt@aan.com](mailto:dbrandt@aan.com), or Madeline Turbes, Health Policy Manager at [mturbes@aan.com](mailto:mturbes@aan.com). We look forward to working with you as we all strive to address the toll of Long COVID on the American public.

<sup>1</sup> <https://www.gao.gov/products/gao-22-105666>

<sup>2</sup> [https://journals.lww.com/neurotodayonline/Fulltext/2021/06030/6\\_Months\\_After\\_COVID\\_19\\_Infection.1\\_in\\_3\\_Develop.4.aspx](https://journals.lww.com/neurotodayonline/Fulltext/2021/06030/6_Months_After_COVID_19_Infection.1_in_3_Develop.4.aspx)

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Orly Avitzur MD". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Orly Avitzur, MD, MBA, FAAN  
President, American Academy of Neurology