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COMMITTEES
CHAIR: ENVIRONMENTAL SAFETY
AND TOXIC MATERIALS
APPROPRIATIONS
PUBLIC SAFETY
REVENUE AND TAXATION
UTILITIES AND ENERGY

March 31, 2022

Honorable Dr. Joaquin Arambula, Chair
Sub. 1 Health and Human Services
1021 O Street, Room 6240
Sacramento, CA 95814

The Honorable Phil Ting, Chair
Assembly Budget Committee
1021 O Street, Room 8230
Sacramento, CA 95814

Re: Research for the Health Impacts of Long COVID

Dear Budget Chairs,

I am writing to request that the California Assembly Budget Committee include in its budget priorities the establishment of a Long COVID Centers of Excellence program to be managed by the University of California. Of the 2.7 million Long COVID cases so far estimated in California, many patients are not receiving access to the care and treatment they need. In addition, there lacks a central repository and coordination of research, education and training related to diagnosing and better understanding Long COVID, its health impacts and most effective treatment. It is necessary and timely for the state to prioritize funding for the treatment, research and education for Long COVID.

Long COVID Centers of Excellence will perform clinical care, carry out needed research, and engage in education, training, and outreach. It is estimated that this budget request will require approximately \$120 million over four years to support a statewide UC Centers of Excellence to address the clinical care crisis in Long COVID. It is recommended that the Centers of Excellence program be managed by the University of California, with some funds reserved for entities outside the University system where UC deems appropriate. These funds will enable treatment of roughly 30,000 patients per year of the estimated million-plus Long COVID and result in an infrastructure capable of knowledgeably treating thousands of additional patients, while putting clinical care and research for Long COVID and other post-viral conditions on par with that of other major diseases.

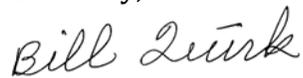
Studies show that roughly thirty percent of COVID-19 survivors experience significant symptoms months after resolution of the acute viral infection. A recent survey of nearly 4000 self-described COVID *long-haulers* found that 65% were still experiencing symptoms 6 months after acute infection, and of those, 80% reported persistent fatigue, 73% post-exertional malaise, and 58% cognitive dysfunction. These symptoms are the three most common among surveyed long-haulers, and all three are primary diagnostic criteria for

myalgic encephalomyelitis/chronic fatigue syndrome (ME/CFS), a highly debilitating disease that pre-COVID affected an estimated 180,000 Californians and cost the California economy an estimated \$5 billion annually in medical expenses and lost wages. With post-COVID ME/CFS onset expected to more than quintuple the California caseload, ME/CFS will be an important disease that can be studied and better treated through the Long COVID Centers of Excellence.

Attached is further information that outlines the details associated with establishing UC Centers of Excellence, the clear need for these Centers to be established and the organizations that are supporting this important budget proposal.

Thank you for your consideration. Please contact my Capitol Director, Evan Gyorkos (evan.gyorkos@asm.ca.gov), if you have any questions.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Bill Quirk".

BILL QUIRK, PhD
Assemblymember, District 20

bq:eg