April 7, 2022

Dear Leaders Schumer and McConnell, Speaker Pelosi, Leader McCarthy, Chairman Leahy, Chairwoman DeLauro and Ranking Members Shelby and Granger,

The Federation of American Societies for Experimental Biology (FASEB) represents 29 societies and over 100,000 researchers working in the biological and biomedical field. As scientists, we urge you to act quickly to finalize an agreement that provides an additional $10 billion to maintain our preparedness during the ongoing worldwide coronavirus pandemic. This emergency funding for the federal COVID response was removed from the final Consolidated Appropriations Act of 2022.

The prior allocation of federal funds for COVID-19 response led to the development of vaccines and new treatments, improved our understanding of how the virus is transmitted, and provided care to critically ill Americans. FASEB commends Congress for working in a bipartisan manner over the last two years to address the coronavirus pandemic and implores you to continue providing the resources necessary to maintain the progress we have achieved thus far.

We do not want to be in a situation where funding arrives too late to make a meaningful difference in saving lives and preventing severe disease should another wave of COVID-19 occur within our borders. Asia and Europe area already experiencing surges. U.S. public health officials are now bracing for an uptick in COVID-19 cases with the BA.2 variant—an omicron subvariant. It has grown in dominance to 59 percent of all new COVID-19 infections in the US for the week ending March 26, up from an estimated 39 percent of all new infections the prior week according to the Centers for Disease Control.
With only 65 percent of the U.S. population fully vaccinated and ongoing studies being conducted to determine if a fourth dose is needed for the general population to maintain sufficiently high antibody levels, our public health infrastructure is at risk of not having the tools available to address COVID such as an adequate supply of monoclonal antibody treatments. Lack of additional federal funds for COVID-19 response would make it more difficult for people to access testing, vaccinations and life-saving treatments. Meanwhile, as of March 29, the Food and Drug Administration has recommended a second booster dose of either the Pfizer-BioNTech or the Moderna COVID-19 vaccines for older people and certain immunocompromised individuals.

Our current supply of therapeutics is projected to start to run out by late May according to the Secretary of the Health and Human Services Xavier Becerra. Funding to reimburse physicians and other providers who provide medical care and COVID-related treatment – especially to uninsured Americans – is also nearly depleted and will have to cease accepting new claims for vaccination services in early April.

Scientific discovery and the reliance on scientific data provided the foundation for tremendous technological and societal advances in the US before and during the current pandemic. It is critical that Congress provide another infusion of funds for NIH and NSF to continue the development of vaccines and therapies and accelerate the progress we have already achieved in addressing COVID.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Patricia L. Morris, MS, PhD
FASEB President