

**Congress of the United States**  
**Washington, DC 20515**

April 29, 2020

Speaker Nancy Pelosi  
U.S. House of Representatives  
H-232, The Capitol  
Washington, DC 20515

Minority Leader Kevin McCarthy  
U.S. House of Representatives  
H-204, The Capitol  
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Mitch McConnell  
Majority Leader  
United States Senate  
S-230, The Capitol  
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Charles Schumer  
Democratic Leader  
United States Senate  
S-220, The Capitol  
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Speaker Pelosi, Leader McCarthy, Leader McConnell, Leader Schumer:

As Members of the New York congressional delegation, we write to urge that you prioritize in the next CARES 2.0 package significant funding to support the mental health of our frontline health care workers. It is imperative that as we provide critical lifesaving equipment to maintain the physical health of these workers, we must also protect the mental health of these brave frontline health care workers – so that they in turn can remain healthy for their patients.

As you know, New York is the nerve center of the global COVID-19 pandemic. With over 300,000 confirmed cases and over 18,000 deaths, nearly one-third of total confirmed cases and deaths in the country are in the State of New York. Our health care system is facing a crisis of catastrophic proportions. In every corner of our nation's health care system, our doctors, nurses, and other health care workers are being asked to battle this invisible enemy.

While there are recent global studies on the mental health impact of the coronavirus on the health care workers, we have also heard directly from our frontline health care workers the harrowing, horrific, and heartbreaking anecdotes of the conditions inside New York hospitals. Faced by the daily deluge of COVID-19 infected patients, many workers have reported significant distress, emotional strain, and immeasurable exhaustion during this pandemic response. These workers have served as emotional caretakers to the dying patients – too often relaying a final, departing message between the patient and their respective families. Because of the lethality and enormous infection rates in New York State, our health care workers have transported hundreds of dead bodies per day. Some who have been infected with the coronavirus have reported being expected to return to work – even before their full recovery. Too many workers have noted the heartache of being separated from their own families, living in separate locations out of fear of compromising the health of their loved ones. And shamefully, too many have endured heightened anxiety from being forced to risk their own lives and health because of a lack of Personal Protective Equipment.

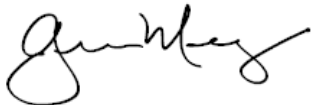
The emotional and psychological burden placed upon these workers can even outweigh the physical burden. Furthermore, the long-term impacts on mental health is yet to be determined. As such, securing the emotional well-being and resilience of our frontline workers will be critical to facing the coronavirus and bolstering the ranks of our health care workforce.

As such, we specifically ask that any subsequent coronavirus relief packages include:

- Significant funding to assess and treat the mental health of COVID-19 frontline health care workers and their immediate family members.
- In the event of the health care worker's death, ensure the immediate surviving family members continue to receive treatment.
- Ensure the cost of such mental health treatment is fully covered, and at no expense of the individuals.
- Provide funding to hospitals to deploy mental health professionals and clinicians to provide on-site mental health care and resources.
- Expand telemedicine services to health care workers and their families.
- Establish an HHS-administered COVID-19 crisis hotline for impacted health care workers, their families, and the general public.
- Funding to the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration, the Health Resources and Services Administration, and the Department of Labor to provide grants to agencies in order to hire more mental and behavioral health professionals for agencies that need them.

As we all agree that the courage, expertise, and fortitude of our frontline health care workers is beyond commendable, we must also ensure our federal priorities to tackle this crisis include the whole health of our frontline health care workers. After all, one thing is undeniable: without these workers, our humanity has no chance of fighting back against this public health crisis.

Sincerely,



Grace Meng  
Member of Congress

/s/ Nydia Velázquez  
Member of Congress

/s/ Jerrold Nadler  
Member of Congress

/s/ Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez  
Member of Congress

/s/ Max Rose  
Member of Congress

/s/ Thomas R. Suozzi  
Member of Congress

/s/ José E. Serrano  
Member of Congress

/s/ Gregory W. Meeks  
Member of Congress

/s/ Eliot L. Engel  
Member of Congress

/s/ Adriano Espaillat  
Member of Congress

/s/ Carolyn B. Maloney  
Member of Congress

/s/ Kathleen M. Rice  
Member of Congress

/s/ Paul D. Tonko  
Member of Congress

/s/ Yvette D. Clarke  
Member of Congress

/s/ Sean Patrick Maloney  
Member of Congress