



# Support Long-Covid Research

## What is Long COVID?

Long COVID is a common term often used to describe symptoms affecting patients following the initial infection by the COVID virus, lasting for several months and affecting the patient's quality of life. It may also be referred to as Post-COVID Conditions or chronic COVID among other names. The National Academy of Medicine provides the following clinical definition of Long COVID:

- Long Covid is an infection associated chronic condition that occurs after SARS-CoV-2 infection and is present for at least 3 months as a continuous, relapsing and remitting, or progressive disease state that affects one or more organ systems.

## Long-COVID Rehabilitation

Inpatient rehabilitation is effective in improving outcomes following severe SARS CoV-2 infection and guidelines recommend comprehensive rehabilitation for Long COVID recovery. A recent systematic review found that rehabilitation that included physical activity led to improvement in functional capacity, respiratory function, and quality of life (97, 72, 96% of studies respectively). Another systematic review found positive benefits of rehabilitation on post-COVID fatigue.

Physiatrists, with their focus on improving function, independence and quality of life, are uniquely qualified to treat patients dealing with the full range of Long COVID symptoms and are trained to work in a team environment to address the patient's symptoms. Current treatments for Long COVID remain mostly palliative and symptom-based due to the lack of understanding and evidence-based research targeting the underlying mechanisms. Physiatrists are well-positioned to lead large, randomized studies of specific rehabilitation protocols in order to develop evidence for the best methods of rehabilitation for Long COVID.

Funding for research into Long COVID rehabilitation benefits the further development of treatment for patients and effective rehabilitation that restores function and quality of life. Additional longitudinal studies focused on both adult and pediatric Long COVID patients are essential to future treatment and prevention of Long COVID.

### SUPPORT LONG-COVID RESEARCH

- ✓ Support (S.801/HR 1616) Comprehensive Access to Resources and Education for Long Covid.
- ✓ Support (s. 2560) Long Covid Support Act.
- ✓ Support (S.4964) A comprehensive Federal response including, research, education and support for affected individuals.

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