

February 6, 2026

My name is Pamela Van de Walle and I am asking you to please support and vote in favor of **HB0027**. This bill will create critical programs like the Maryland Long Covid Research Fund and support Long Covid innovation which Long Covid patients can't wait another minute for.

My 17-year-old daughter has been suffering from Long Covid since May 2022. After another COVID infection in November 2024, her condition worsened significantly. Since then, she has been unable to attend school in person and is now mostly bedbound and isolated. As a result of COVID, she developed Postural Orthostatic Tachycardia Syndrome (POTS) and Myalgic Encephalomyelitis/Chronic Fatigue Syndrome (ME/CFS). Her symptoms include altered taste and smell, frequent headaches and migraines, gastrointestinal pain, chronic sore throat, dizziness, fainting, extreme fatigue, and severe neuropathic leg pain that at times leaves her unable to walk for days. She experiences flare periods that often require emergency room visits and, at times, week-long hospitalizations. Managing her illness has involved repeated trials of multiple medications with limited success, reflecting the lack of established treatments.

Before Long Covid, my daughter was a healthy, high-achieving student, athlete and performer. She played soccer, swam, played lacrosse and field hockey, and excelled in theatre, attending a performing arts magnet school, earning lead roles, and selected for a local professional theatre's Teen Performance Company. After contracting COVID again in November of her sophomore year, her school attendance collapsed, and she was forced to give up the activities she loved. She now faces an uncertain future, illustrating the profound and lasting impact Long Covid is having on children and families like ours.

Covid-19 is still running rampant through Maryland, leaving new cases of Long Covid in adults and children in its wake. Wastewater data shows around 117,300 new weekly cases currently in Maryland ¹, which will leave around 20,000 people disabled by Long Covid...again, weekly. Annapolis is at the CDC's highest level of Covid spread- Very High. Nationally, Covid case numbers are higher now than all of 2020 and 2021. This is a crisis.

Around 25-30% of people who get Covid will develop Long Covid (LC)², a complex disease that is composed of 200 symptoms and has no approved treatment or cure³. The likelihood of developing LC goes up around 14% with each Covid infection, so by three infections, the chance is 40%⁴. The risk further increases if someone is a women⁵, Black⁶, Latino⁷, disabled or chronically ill⁸, low-income⁹, Trans¹⁰, has HIV/AIDS¹¹, elderly¹², Indigenous¹³, and/or a healthcare worker¹⁴. Around 50% of people with LC also develop the devastating condition Myalgic Encephalomyelitis (ME)¹⁵, which has a recovery rate of only ~5%¹⁶.

Marylanders with Long Covid and their friends and family are desperate for help and the federal funding and care for LC research is abysmal at best. We are depending on our state leaders to care about us and fight for us. Please support **HB0027** and be the leaders and innovators that sick Marylanders deserve.

Thank you.

Sincerely,

Pamel Van de Walle

1. <https://www.pmc19.com/data/>
2. <https://www.cidrap.umn.edu/covid-19/studies-across-14-nations-show-25-30-rate-long-covid>
3. <https://jamanetwork.com/journals/jama/fullarticle/2805540>
4. <https://www150.statcan.gc.ca/n1/pub/75-006-x/2023001/article/00015-eng.htm>
5. <https://www.cdc.gov/covid/long-term-effects/index.html>
6. www.nih.gov/news-events/news-releases/nih-recover-research-identifies-potential-long-covid-disparities
7. <https://www.cdc.gov/covid/long-term-effects/index.html>
8. <https://www.cdc.gov/covid/long-term-effects/index.html>
9. <https://www.cdc.gov/covid/long-term-effects/index.html>
10. <https://longcovidjustice.org/trans/>
11. <https://longcovidjustice.org/hiv-lc-risk/>
12. <https://www.cdc.gov/covid/long-term-effects/index.html>
13. ncuih.org/wp-content/uploads/Takeaways-Indigenous-Wellness-A-Conversation-on-Long-Covid-5.25.2023.pdf
14. www.cidrap.umn.edu/covid-19/studies-detail-high-rates-long-covid-among-healthcare-dental-workers#

15. <https://www.yalemedicine.org/news/long-covid-mecfs-and-the-importance-of-studying-infection-associated-illnesses>

16. https://medpedia.org/wiki/Prognosis_for_myalgic_encephalomyelitis_and_chronic_fatigue_syndrome