

My name is Emily Richey-Stavrand, I am a St. Marys County resident with severe Long Covid, and I am begging you to **support and vote in favor of HB0027**. This bill will create desperately needed programs like the Maryland Long Covid Research Fund and Long Covid innovation grants.

Covid-19 continues to run 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...a week. 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.

I got Long Covid, Myalgic Encephalomyelitis, MCAS, POTS, and Craniocervical Instability from a single Covid infection that I caught from my (unmasked) doctor. Two years ago, before I got Covid, I was a long-distance runner, active in my community, and in grad school for public policy. Now I live with my parents and can really only leave my house for doctors' appointments. My symptoms include: extreme fatigue, sleep dysfunction, internal tremors, disabling brain inflammation, loss of word find, heart palpitations, new allergic reactions to most foods, exercise intolerance (which is awful as a former athlete), constant joint pain, nerve pain, tinnitus, micro blood clots, Central Nervous System dysregulation, muscle pain, dyskinesia, sensitivity to sounds and light, and most crushing of all Post-Exertional Malaise. I have tried over 100 treatments for Long Covid (LC) and am still mostly bedbound. Life is hell due to the lack of treatment options, and the glacial pace of LC research.

People are losing their jobs, their homes, their futures because of this wretched disease, and there is no help and no one to turn to. Nationally, lost earnings alone due to LC are estimated at \$170 billion yearly¹⁷. It makes long-term economic sense to support Long Covid sufferers so they can recover, heal, and return to work, pay taxes, and have decreased medical costs.

We are desperate for help, and the federal funding and care for LC research is abysmal at best. Marylanders 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,
Emily Richey-Stavrand

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. www.yalemedicine.org/news/long-covid-mecfs-and-the-importance-of-studying-infection-associated-illnesses
16. https://me-pedia.org/wiki/Prognosis_for_myalgic_encephalomyelitis_and_chronic_fatigue_syndrome
17. <https://www.nature.com/articles/s41533-025-00460-8#data-availability>