

Support and vote in favor of **HB0027**

My name is Seifer Almasy. 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.

This situation personally impacts me because I do not want to risk the health impacts of Long Covid while attending routine healthcare appointments, conducting errands in my community, or visiting with friends or family. After speaking with Long Covid patients and researching Long Covid on my own, I am deeply concerned about getting Long Covid. This is because if I Long Covid then it is very possible that I will become unable to work and support myself financially, and it is also very possible that I will lose the capacity to enjoy things like reading books or playing games.

Unfortunately, I have experienced skepticism, denial, and hostility while advocating for my own safety. I have needed to abandon many of the activities or services that I regularly engaged in prior to the start of the Covid-19 pandemic. For example, before the pandemic started I regularly attended my routine appointments with health care providers. But now those providers do not acknowledge that COVID-19 transmits through aerosols. This makes getting even routine, recommended care very challenging for me.

Recently, it took me a tremendous effort just to get vaccinated for Covid and flu. After 34 phone calls and over 4 hours of either waiting on hold or pleading with whoever answered my call, I finally found a provider who wore an N-95 while giving me the vaccines. I count myself as privileged and very lucky that I could muster the time and energy necessary to secure safe healthcare. Can you imagine how challenging this must be for someone with Long Covid?

The reality is that people are losing their jobs, their homes, their futures because of this wretched disease, and they have nothing for support. No one is helping them.

We have an opportunity to change this now with **HB0027**.

Let's be clear; 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, which will leave around 20,000 people disabled by Long Covid.

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), a complex disease that is composed of 200 symptoms and has no approved treatment or cure. The likelihood of

developing LC goes up around 14% with each Covid infection. By three infections, the chance is 40%. The risk further increases if someone is a woman, Black, Latino, disabled or chronically ill, low-income, Trans, has HIV/AIDS, elderly, Indigenous, and/or a healthcare worker.

Around 50% of people with LC also develop the devastating condition Myalgic Encephalomyelitis (ME), which has a recovery rate of only ~5%. Nationally, lost earnings alone due to LC are estimated at \$170 billion yearly. With this in mind, it really 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.

Marylanders with Long Covid and their friends and family are desperate for help. The federal funding and care for Long Covid research is abysmal at best. Leaders in Maryland can do something about this by supporting HB0027.

Be the leaders and innovators that all Marylanders, and especially those who are sick vulnerable, deserve.

Thank you.

Sincerely,

Seifer Almasy

Sources

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. <https://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. <https://ncuih.org/wp-content/uploads/Takeaways-Indigenous-Wellness-A-Conversation-on-Long-Covid-5.25.2023.pdf>
14. <https://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://me-pedia.org/wiki/Prognosis_for_myalgic_encephalomyelitis_and_chronic_fatigue_syndrome
17. <https://www.nature.com/articles/s41533-025-00460-8#data-availability>