



November 18, 2020

The Honorable Alex M. Azar II  
Secretary  
U.S. Department of Health and Human Services  
Hubert H. Humphrey Bldg.  
200 Independence Ave, SW  
Washington, D.C. 20201

Dear Secretary Azar:

The American Lung Association is the leading organization working to save lives by improving lung health and preventing lung disease through education, advocacy and research. More than 36 million people have lung disease in the United States, and many of these lung patients are at risk for developing severe complications if they contract COVID-19. The pandemic has also highlighted the disproportionate toll of death and disease endured by people of color in the United States.

Each day brings new reports of record numbers of COVID-19 cases, and news reports are chronicling that hospitals are at or near capacity. According to Johns Hopkins University as of November 17, 2020, more than 11 million people have been diagnosed and 247,356 have died.<sup>i</sup>

We are optimistic that vaccines will be available soon, but, even with approved vaccines and an aggressive vaccination effort, there will be an ongoing need to treat patients with COVID-19. We are writing to urge you to use your authority to support the development of therapeutics. One avenue to consider is increasing the Biomedical Advanced Research and Development Authority's (BARDA) investment in the development of lifesaving COVID-19 therapeutics.

There are more than 560 therapeutic development programs in the planning stages, and the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) had reviewed 370 clinical trials as of October 31, 2020.<sup>ii</sup> BARDA is currently funding the research and development of eleven therapeutics.<sup>iii</sup> Increasing the investment in new therapeutics will help ensure that current and future COVID-19 patients have the opportunity to access proven therapeutic treatment options.

As the pandemic grows and the healthcare system is stretched beyond its limits, we urge you to consider how to increase investment in therapeutics in order to provide COVID-19 patients with safe and effective treatments. Such new

therapeutics will improve health outcomes for COVID-19 patients and help save lives. Thank you.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Harold Wimmer". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Harold P. Wimmer  
President & CEO

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<sup>i</sup> Nuzzo and et al. *Johns Hopkins Coronavirus Resource Center*, Johns Hopkins University & Medicine, 2020, [coronavirus.jhu.edu](https://coronavirus.jhu.edu). Accessed November 17, 2020

<sup>ii</sup> Coronavirus Treatment Acceleration Program (CTAP) Dashboard. <https://www.fda.gov/drugs/coronavirus-covid-19-drugs/coronavirus-treatment-acceleration-program-ctap> 2020 Accessed November 17, 2020

<sup>iii</sup> BARDA'S Rapidly-Expanding COVID-19 Medical Countermeasure Portfolio <https://medicalcountermeasures.gov/app/barda/coronavirus/COVID19.aspx> 2020. Accessed November 17, 2020