

## **2022 Midterm END PANDEMICS Recommendations for U.S. Policy Makers**

*Brought to you by R2H Action [Right to Health], Marked By COVID and COVID Survivors for CHANGE, groups representing the millions of people who have lost a loved one to COVID-19 and the tens of millions more struggling with the long-term impacts of a pandemic that never should have happened.*

Pandemics are also not inevitable, they are the product of policies. Choices by politicians have resulted in rapid acceleration and intensification—pandemics are accelerating and getting worse.

Our organizations call on our leaders to stop COVID-19 and Monkeypox, make up lost ground on other older pandemics like HIV, TB and polio, and take the actions needed to stop pandemics of the future. It is urgent to apply key lessons and best practices of COVID-19 (*and Zika, Ebola and H1N1*) to root out the scourge of ongoing crises, and simultaneously urgently tackle the *root causes* of disease outbreaks. We call on policy makers to reverse the systems of inequality that disproportionately impact some communities much more than others. We urge political leaders to endorse these urgent recommendations:

- 1. Pandemic-proof the planet with the U.S. fair-share of the \$10 billion total needed annually for a global fund that prevents diseases from spilling over or spreading internationally.**
  - Fund implementation of national comprehensive pandemic prevention plans in low- and middle- income countries to (1) stop zoonotic spillover, (2) contain breakthrough outbreaks and meet WHO's International Health Regulations, and (3) build resilient public-sector health systems needed to realize the right to health.
- 2. Develop vaccines within 100 days of a future outbreak. Vaccinate *now* to stop the variants. Vaccinate the world within one year.**
  - Share vaccine recipes, build local manufacturing and tech-transfer hubs, and make “last-mile” supply chain investments to ensure clinical trial data, publicly funded therapeutics, vaccines, and diagnostics are accessible and able to achieve reciprocal regulatory approval worldwide.
- 3. Support Long COVID patients, including adopting an aggressive NIH research agenda, and ensuring that emergency Medicaid coverage and comprehensive Social Security Disability benefits are readily available for long-haulers**
- 4. Fight poverty and provide comprehensive benefits for COVID survivors and people who have lost loved ones, similar to the 9/11 Victims Compensation Fund, to cover out-of-pocket medical costs, mental health counseling, pain and suffering, back hazard pay, and loss of earnings.**
  - End child poverty, starting with (but not limited to) children orphaned by COVID-19, with childhood tax credits and childhood savings accounts that create a financial foundation for vulnerable youth with annual deposits until 18
- 5. Enact a permanent, federally-recognized COVID Memorial and COVID Memorial Day to commemorate the ones we've lost—and to mark this enormous loss of life, making sure it never happens again.**
- 6. Launch a COVID-19 Commission, modeled after the 9-11 Commission, to prepare a complete account of government preparedness and response, and map what we need to avoid a repeat.**
- 7. Establish a permanent one million-person Public Health Job Corps to tackle end racial and regional health disparities in America, and mitigate impact of COVID-19 and future pandemics.**
  - Fund public health jobs for local social change organizations rooted in communities, in addition to state and local government agencies.
- 8. Fight for universal, high-quality, low-cost healthcare, where we live, at prices we can afford, that gets progressively better, easier and cheaper, and protects the right to choose.**
  - Extend ACA subsidies permanently. Prohibit junk plans and surprise medical bills. Expand required benefits. Fund home and community-based services for elderly and people with disabilities. Require price transparency and prevent price gouging. Revoke monopolies if drug companies charge Americans more for products of publicly subsidized research than the next 10 richest countries.
  - Establish in law the reproductive rights of all pregnant people to decide themselves whether or not to give birth.

9. **Establish a National Pandemic Action Center that maintains (A) always-warm, pathogen-agnostic global sentinel surveillance and metagenomic sequencing system, (B) the CARES Act's National Public Health Data System, (C) standing team leading 100-day vaccine research and manufacturing, (D) PPE and essential medicines stockpiles**
  - Fund and establish yearly stress-test norms around the emergency response and mitigation plan, modeled after military readiness exercises.
10. **Establish clear, science-based criteria to *automatically* trigger stay-at-home, masking, and vaccination measures, as well as initiating the social supports needed to implement such measures (payroll protection, enhanced unemployment, protections for essential workers, etc).**
  - Provide funding and incentives to states and property owners/developers for updated building codes and renovations that include far ultraviolet C lighting and ventilation systems to reduce viral circulation in public buildings, such as offices, shopping centers, restaurants and places of worship.