



The Honorable Joe Biden
1500 Market St.
Philadelphia, PA 19102

August 13, 2020

Dear Vice President Biden:

We write on behalf of the Infectious Diseases Society of America (IDSA) and its HIV Medicine Association (HIVMA) to offer our societies and members as a resource to you as our nation confronts the COVID-19 pandemic and the health inequities that it has exposed. IDSA and HIVMA represent over 12,000 infectious diseases and HIV physicians, scientists, and other health care and public health professionals working on the frontlines of the COVID-19 response across the country. We request an opportunity to meet with you and your health policy advisors and ask to be included in any convenings of health policy organizations.

IDSA and HIVMA have developed and continue to maintain a [COVID-19 Resource Center](#) as the go-to source for critical and up to date information for frontline providers, [policymakers](#), journalists, and the general public as they respond to the COVID-19 pandemic. Chief among our efforts are [federal policy recommendations](#) calling for a well-coordinated and adequately resourced federal response that is rooted in the best available evidenced-based data. Our response must address the urgent need for [a national mask requirement and accompanying educational campaign](#); a sufficient and stable supply of personal protective equipment, testing and contract tracing capacity; and a transparent and equitable distribution of vaccines and treatments.

The COVID-19 pandemic has disproportionately impacted the African American, Latinx and Native American communities, shining a bright light on persistent health disparities in our nation. The current national focus on these longstanding inequities as evidenced earlier by other infectious disease epidemics like HIV provides a critical opportunity to tackle systemic racism—a public health crisis with a significant death toll—and ensure universal access to healthcare. We have developed a series of [policy briefs](#) with recommendations to reduce health disparities, build more equitable health care and public health systems and address the underlying social determinants of health.

This pandemic has also underscored the importance of preparedness for pandemics and the tremendous human and economic costs of not being prepared. The next outbreak is *only a matter of when, not if*. To prepare and respond effectively, we must invest now in robust well-trained [workforce](#) in infectious diseases, public health and basic and translational science. These workforces are critical not only for outbreak preparedness but to address the epidemic of [antimicrobial resistance](#), a significant health threat that renders antibiotics useless and kills at least 35,000 people annually in the U.S., and to end the HIV epidemic in the U.S. and abroad, a goal now within reach.

We greatly appreciate your leadership and would welcome any opportunity to serve as a resource. Please contact us through Amanda Jezek, IDSA Senior Vice President, Public Policy and Government Relations at ajezek@idsociety.org or Andrea Weddle, HIVMA Executive Director at aweddle@hivma.org.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Thomas M. File, Jr." in a cursive script.

Thomas M. File, Jr., M.D., MSc, FIDSA
President, IDSA

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Judith Feinberg, MD" in a cursive script.

Judith Feinberg, M.D., FIDSA
Chair, HIVMA