

For Immediate Release

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Philadelphia Health Commissioner, St. Rep. Chris Rabb, and Advocacy Groups Urge Congress to Take Action, Provide Essential Resources to Manage Crisis



Philadelphia, PA — Today, Philadelphia Health Commissioner Dr. Cheryl Bettigole and State Representative Chris Rabb joined Protect Our Care Pennsylvania, For Our Future Pennsylvania, and other health groups to call on Pat Toomey to vote to provide additional funding to support the nation's sustained response to the COVID-19 pandemic. Experts have warned of severe consequences to the American people without additional funds to maintain testing capacity and supply lifesaving treatments. In a matter of weeks, our ability to fight against COVID-19 will be severely diminished if Congress fails to approve additional funding.

President Biden has ensured that the majority of Americans are vaccinated, boosters are easily obtainable, testing is widespread and convenient, and there are multiple therapeutics to treat COVID — ALL at no cost to Americans. But we can't stop short. Pennsylvanians are counting on Pat Toomey to vote to provide these critical resources to manage the COVID-19 pandemic, and support a return to normalcy.

"In cities like Philadelphia, cutting the funds that pay for testing, treatment, and vaccinations for those who don't have health insurance means putting all of us at risk," **said Pennsylvania Health Commissioner Dr. Cheryl Bettigole.** "Congress needs to fund the tools we need so that we don't find ourselves unarmed against the next threat to public health."

“On the federal level, we need more aid where it matters most. We need this funding because it’s literally a matter of life and death for the most vulnerable members of our society across the commonwealth of Pennsylvania,” **said State Representative Chris Rabb.**” This should not be a partisan issue, because the virus does not discriminate. People across Pennsylvania need help, we have the money to do it, the question is if we have the political will.”

“The consequences of Congress failing to act on providing additional COVID-19 funding for Pennsylvanians are dire,” **said Michael Berman, the State Director for Protect Our Care Pennsylvania.** “If Congress fails to act now, it will set us back in our fight against COVID-19, leave us less prepared for the future, and end up costing all of us more.”

“The lack of funding for efforts to combat COVID-19 due to Congressional inaction would be devastating to Pennsylvanians and their health,” **said Robin Stelly of the Pennsylvania Health Access Network.** “Failure to provide adequate funding will mean fewer monoclonal antibodies, fewer tests, and fewer vaccines for Pennsylvanians.”

“It’s not that nurses are afraid to take care of COVID patients – we signed up for it. It’s that there’s no money to retain experienced nurses to stay on staff to care for you, your family, and your friends,” **said nurse Kathleen Jae.** “We need Federal funding to bring nurses and nurses aids back to the bedside, so we can take care of the most vulnerable populations in hospitals. If we don’t have a way to maintain staffing in hospitals, we’re going to see a crisis like we’ve never seen before in our health care system. To withhold funding is going to cost us lives.”

“I am here this morning to call on Congress to act now to provide additional funding to address the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic. If we are to live with this virus as an endemic, our communities across the country need treatments, testing, and funding to keep our struggling families afloat,” **said Ashely McBride, State Director of For Our Future PA.** “This funding is particularly important here in Philadelphia, the poorest big city and one in which its Black and Brown populations have been ignored and looked over by the federal government for decades, especially during the last two years of COVID.”

You can watch video of the event [here](#).