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**Disappointed in White House Response to Long Term COVID
Impact, Marked By COVID Demands Action**

WASHINGTON— Today, the White House and the Department of Health and Human Services released [reports](#) laying out existing resources and plans to address long-term effects of COVID-19. [Marked By COVID](#) is gravely concerned with the missing input from the COVID bereaved and the lack of urgency around Long COVID—a condition [affecting 1 in 5 Americans](#) who have tested positive.

Kristin Urquiza, co-Founder of Marked By COVID released the following statement:

“There is no federal plan to reckon with the 1 million + lives (and counting) lost to Covid-19. People who lost loved ones to Covid put their trust in this Administration to respond to the pandemic with the full power of the federal government, but the feds are instead sweeping Covid deaths under the rug and into the memory hole as we did with the 1918 pandemic. This ostensibly rubber-stamps the approval of mass death, the abdication of government to prioritize saving lives during disasters, and runs counter to

the number one recommendation from people experiencing covid loss: We must not bury the legacies of the people we lost.

After two-and-a-half years and over [1 million deaths](#) due to COVID-19, the White House just published two underwhelming reports outlining the research plans and paltry federal resources available to the COVID bereaved and those enduring the long-term impacts of COVID-19. While the reports do a decent job of confirming the disproportionate impacts this pandemic has had on Indigenous, Black, brown, and other people of color as well as people with low income—essentially confirming Covid-19 as the Category-5 hurricane to advances in racial, disability, economic, and health justice— it leaves much to be desired in creating actionable solutions and nowhere near meets the scale of the problems these reports outline.

COVID bereaved people and those with Long COVID have been through hell and back and are actively being left behind as the country returns to business as usual. After waiting since March 2020 for a list of existing government resources available to them, their roadmap was supposed to be in these reports. Without timelines, staffing, budget, and community-backed policy recommendations these reports read like a modern day Yellow Pages.

We're disappointed to see that these reports include no interviews with bereaved communities aiming to understand their needs and no new resources available to them. The reports simply outline a list of general, pre-existing resources. Two years into a catastrophic global pandemic that has devastated the lives and livelihoods of millions, it's discouraging that there aren't any new resources specific to pandemic-bereaved folks. The reports provide links to resources such as ways to support children who are now orphaned due to COVID-19 with suggestions such as "be a good role model" and "reassure your child that they are safe." It must be questioned how in good conscience the White House can deem these suggestions to be sufficient in caring for children that have lost caregivers and loved ones. Many of the resources provided in the reports seem like cold comforts and temporary bandaids when a tourniquet and emergency surgery is needed

for people whose lives have been torn apart and are in financial and emotional freefall due to the government's handling of the pandemic and their losses.

In the reports, the national research plan only uses the word “mask” four times and focuses on individual behavior only. We have been saying it for over two years and it has fallen on deaf ears, but we will not stop: We cannot end a pandemic and prevent innocent lives lost by focusing on the individual. Responding to a pandemic requires community and coming together for the common good of all. Not leaving behind the most vulnerable. It requires systemic answers to systemic problems.

The dire need for pandemic resources and investments in public health infrastructure isn't going anywhere. The WHO recently declared Monkeypox [another health emergency](#). **On the heels of yet another public health crisis, Marked By COVID makes the following demands:**

- 1. Establish a COVID-19 Community Expert Advisory Committee:** A real partnership for bereaved communities with a Federal Advisory Committee, including a formal advisory role.
- 2. Create a Covid Memorial Day:** The federal government must join the 4 states and 180 cities that have already called for the first Monday of March to be remembered as Covid Memorial Day, in perpetuity. Congress must establish a COVID Memorial Day to permanently recognize the scale of this loss. Not only is a memorial day vital to the grieving process and individual healing, it is needed to build community and allow for the bereaved to recognize that they are not alone.
- 3. Establish Permanent Memorials:** Partner with Marked By COVID to bring to life the community vision of a large, meaningful, accessible, national reckoning of losses due to the pandemic, including the more than one million people who have died.
- 4. Control the spread:** The best way to prevent bereavement and long Covid is to prevent new cases. On ramps as well as off ramps must be

implemented for masking and testing to keep vulnerable populations safe.

- 5. Establish an independent COVID Commission:** A formal investigation of our national response to the COVID-19 pandemic and its failures.

We hope the Biden Administration will prioritize these demands, as they will have a lasting impact on the lives of COVID bereaved families and the prevention of future pandemics.”

If you're interested in speaking with co-Founder Kristin Urquiza, and activists within the Marked By COVID network, please reach out to Christine Keeves at Christine@MarkedByCovid.com.

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[Marked By COVID](#) is a national, grassroots-powered 501(c)4 nonprofit organization that promotes accountability, recognition, justice, and a pandemic-free future by elevating truth and science. Kristin Urquiza co-founded MBC days after her first-generation Mexican-American father, Mark, passed away from the virus