



**Catalyzing Innovation for Healthy Aging**

Contact: Lauren Smith  
[lsmith@agingresearch.org](mailto:lsmith@agingresearch.org)  
Direct: (202) 688-1229  
Cell: (240) 498-8123

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**National Groups Call on U.S. Federal Health Agency Leaders to  
Stand Strong for Science Over Politics in the Fight Against COVID-19**

*Faith in Public Health Guidance and Vaccine and Treatment Approval Processes  
Must be Restored to Overcome the Pandemic*

**WASHINGTON, September 22, 2020**—The [Alliance for Aging Research](#) (Alliance) and 79 other national organizations representing patients, healthcare providers, and multi-stakeholder coalitions signed a letter directed to the leaders of federal health care agencies urging them to rise above the political considerations and focus on providing the American public with information about the well-established guidelines in place to ensure safe and effective COVID-19 prevention, detection, and treatment. Information and decisions that are perceived as anything less than science-based weaken the public’s confidence in research and innovation, and hinder adherence to mitigation efforts. In fact, a recent [STAT/Harris poll](#) found 78 percent of Americans worry the COVID-19 vaccine approval process is being driven by politics rather than science. It is this sentiment that federal government health officials must work with trusted partners to change if they intend to curb the deadly spread of COVID-19 and encourage widespread acceptance of an effective vaccine.

“Public perception of political influence in scientific decision-making is causing widespread confusion and distrust. We call on our federal health agency leaders to be straight with policymakers and the public about what lies ahead in the fight against COVID-19, without sugarcoating or political spin,” said Susan Peschin, MHS, President and CEO of the Alliance for Aging Research, which spearheaded the effort. “As our letter states, ‘stand strong, and we will join with you to communicate that scientists are leading the way to ensure treatments and vaccines are safe and effective—and in turn—lead the nation to full recovery.’ The stakes couldn’t be higher.”

The letter, published today in the Washington, DC, edition of the *Wall Street Journal* to reach a wide swath of federal decisionmakers ahead of tomorrow’s Senate HELP hearing, [COVID-19: An Update on the Federal Response](#), emphasizes the vital role American public health officials play in the prevention, detection, and treatment of the coronavirus. The letter outlines:

- To promote public health and economic recovery, government decisions must be based on evidence – not politics or individual interests.
- By clearly explaining the processes in place to ensure scientific rigor, federal agencies and government leaders will build the confidence and public trust necessary for America to meet this challenge.
- Evidence derived from clinical trials that meet FDA standards should drive assessment of which COVID-19 therapeutics are safe and effective.
- Routine, rapid, accurate, and easy-to-access COVID-19 testing—followed by timely and efficient contact tracing—is needed to help prevent community spread.

The 80 organizations listed below signed the letter:

AcademyHealth  
Aging Life Care Association  
AliveAndKickn  
Alliance for Aging Research

Alpha-1 Foundation  
Alstrom Syndrome International  
American Academy of Family Physicians  
American Academy of Neurology

American Academy of Pediatrics	GO2 Foundation for Lung Cancer
American Anthropological Association	HealthyWomen
American Association for Dental Research	Hermansky-Pudlak Syndrome Network
American Association of Colleges of Pharmacy	Infectious Diseases Society of America
American Association on Health and Disability	Lakeshore Foundation
American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists	Lupus and Allied Diseases Association, Inc.
American College of Physicians	Lupus Foundation of America
American Geriatrics Society	Men's Health Network
American Medical Association	Mended Hearts
American Nurses Association	MLD Foundation
American Pharmacists Association	National Association of Social Workers (NASW)
American Psychiatric Association	National Breast Cancer Coalition
American Society for Cell Biology	National Communication Association
American Society of Consultant Pharmacists	National Consumers League
American Society of Tropical Medicine and Hygiene	National Foundation for Infectious Diseases
Arthritis Foundation	National Health Council
Association of American Medical Colleges	National Hispanic Medical Association
Association of Black Cardiologists	National Medical Association
Association of Jewish Aging Services	National Minority Quality Forum
Association of Schools and Colleges of Optometry (ASCO)	National Organization for Rare Disorders
Asthma and Allergy Foundation of America	National Psoriasis Foundation
Big Cities Health Coalition	National Treasury Employees Union (representing the employees of FDA)
Biophysical Society	NBIA Disorders Association
CancerCare	Phelan-McDermid Syndrome Foundation
Caregiver Action Network	Prevent Blindness
Coalition for the Life Sciences	Prostate Cancer International
Consortium of Social Science Associations	Public Affairs Council
COPD Foundation	Spina Bifida Association
Entomological Society of America	StopAfib.org
Epilepsy Foundation	The Arc of the United States
Everylife Foundation for Rare Diseases	The Gerontological Society of America
Families USA	The Mended Hearts, Inc
Federation of American Scientists	Thomas J. Long School of Pharmacy, University of the Pacific
FORCE: Facing Our Risk of Cancer Empowered	Tribal Ground LLC
Friends of Cancer Research	USP
Global Healthy Living Foundation	
Global Liver Institute	

###

### **About the Alliance for Aging Research**

The Alliance for Aging Research is the leading nonprofit organization dedicated to accelerating the pace of scientific discoveries and their application to vastly improve the universal human experience of aging and health. The Alliance believes advances in research help people live longer, happier, more productive lives and reduce healthcare costs over the long term. For more than 30 years, the Alliance has guided efforts to substantially increase funding and focus for aging at the National Institutes of Health and Food and Drug Administration; built influential coalitions to guide groundbreaking regulatory improvements for age-related diseases; and created award-winning, high-impact educational materials to improve the health and well-being of older adults and their family caregivers. For more information, visit [www.agingresearch.org](http://www.agingresearch.org).