



AMERICAN PUBLIC HEALTH ASSOCIATION
For science. For action. For health.

January 31, 2023

U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Representative:

On behalf of the American Public Health Association, a diverse community of public health professionals that champion the health of all people and communities, I write in strong opposition to several bills related to the COVID-19 pandemic that will be considered on the House floor this week. We urge you to oppose H.R. 497 the Freedom for Health Care Workers Act, H.R. 382, the Pandemic is Over Act and H.J. Res. 7, legislation to immediately end the national emergency related to the COVID-19 pandemic. To date, COVID-19 has tragically taken the lives of more than one million individuals in the United States and any change to current policy should be based on science, not politics.

Existing COVID-19 vaccine mandates have proven effective. Mandates are an essential policy to increase vaccination rates in health care and long-term care settings and protect the health care workforce and the patients and residents they serve. H.R. 497 would overturn the evidence-based Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services COVID-19 vaccine requirement for health care workers in settings that participate in the Medicare and Medicaid programs. In July, 2021, APHA was among the 60 organizations representing the country's doctors, nurses, pharmacists, and other health professionals as well as some of the country's most prominent health care experts that issued [a joint statement urging COVID-19 vaccine mandates for all workers in health and long-term care](#).

We also urge you to oppose H.R. 382 and H.J. Res. 7, legislation to immediately end the current public health and national emergencies related to the COVID-19 pandemic. These emergencies provide the federal government with flexibilities and resources essential to supporting our public health and health care systems responses to the COVID-19 pandemic and also ensuring that the nation's most vulnerable individuals and families have access to critical health services during the pandemic. The Biden administration has announced it will end the emergency declarations on May 11 and we oppose any effort by Congress to put politics above sound public health policy by prematurely ending the emergency declarations.

Thank you for your attention to our views on this troubling legislation. We instead urge you to work in a bipartisan manner to strengthen our nation's public health and health care systems to ensure our nation is better prepared and resourced for the next pandemic or public health emergency.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Georges C. Benjamin". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name being the most prominent.

Georges C. Benjamin, MD
Executive Director