



May 12, 2020

The Honorable Carolyn B. Maloney
The United States House of Representatives
2308 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Representative Maloney:

On behalf of the Infectious Diseases Society of America (IDSA) and the HIV Medicine Association (HIVMA), we write to offer our strong support for Student Loan Forgiveness for Frontline Health Workers Act and to thank you for your leadership in authoring this important legislation.

Infectious diseases (ID) and HIV specialists are central frontline health care professionals providing direct care to patients with COVID-19, leading responses in our institutions and coordinating with state and local public health authorities. As many health care systems and hospitals suffer financial losses due to the pandemic, many frontline health care professionals are facing salary cuts and other negative financial consequences. Your legislation would help provide much needed fiscal relief, including for newer physicians who have, on average about \$200,000 in student debt.

Federal recognition of the value of health professionals who are central to pandemic response—including ID and HIV physicians—may ultimately help encourage more new physicians to enter our specialty. In recent years, ID fellowship training programs have struggled to attract a sufficient number of applicants, due in large part to the significant salary disparity between ID/HIV physicians and specialties that focus on procedure-based care, with high student debt driving increasingly more physicians toward these lucrative specialties. Ultimately, we must secure the future of the ID/HIV physician workforce to ensure we are not only prepared for future outbreaks and pandemics, but for the ongoing challenge of multidrug-resistant bacterial infections that kill over 30,000 hospitalized patients annually.

Once again, we strongly support the Student Loan Forgiveness for Frontline Health Workers Act and look forward to working with you to advance this legislation.

Sincerely,

Thomas M. File, Jr., MD, MSc
Fellow of the IDSA
President, IDSA

Judith Feinberg, MD
Fellow of the IDSA
Chair, HIVMA