April 3, 2020

The Honorable Nancy Pelosi
Speaker of the House
Washington, DC  20515

Dear Speaker Pelosi,

On behalf of the over 3,000 scientists who are members of the Population Association of America (PAA) (www.populationassociation.org) and over 40 population research centers nationwide comprising the Association of Population Centers (www.popcenters.org) that receive federal funding, including 6 centers in your home state of California, we thank you for your leadership on the Coronavirus Aid, Relief and Economic Security (CARES) Act (P.L. 116-136). While this legislation contained provisions of interest to the population research community, including some small business relief and funding for public health data modernization, it did not contain several provisions that our organizations encourage you and your colleagues to consider including in the fourth COVID-19 relief package. PAA and APC asks you respectfully to consider including the following:

Relief for meeting cancellations—During debate on the CARES legislation, PAA and APC joined forces with the American Society of Association Executives (ASAE) to advocate for including associations, nonprofits, and other tax-exempt organizations that have been forced to cancel annual meetings as a result of COVID-19. In a March 18 letter to congressional leadership, PAA President Eileen Crimmins explained that the pandemic forced PAA to cancel its annual scientific meeting scheduled for April 22-25, 2020, in Washington DC. The PAA meeting is not only our society’s most important scientific gathering, it also accounts for over half of our annual revenue. As a result of canceling our 2020 meeting, PAA anticipates losing almost $1 million—an amount that will cripple the organization’s reserves. We know that canceling our meeting has an adverse ripple effect on the local economy and the nation’s hospitality and aviation industries as well. We encourage Congress to consider including $25 billion to help associations, nonprofits, and other tax-exempt organizations recover from COVID-19 meeting cancellations.

Increase funding for National Institute on Aging (NIA) and National Child Health and Human Development (NICHD)—We are pleased that the NIH received almost $1 billion to support COVID-19 related research at targeted Institutes (NIAID, NHLBI, NLM, NCATS, NIBIB, and OD). However, other NIH Institutes and Centers (ICSs) that could make significant contributions towards addressing immediate and long-term effects of the pandemic did not receive additional research funding. PAA
and APC encourage Congress to consider providing two Institutes, the National Institute on Aging (NIA) and National Institute of Child Health and Human Development (NICHD) with additional funding as part of the fourth relief package.

Given the disproportionate effect that the pandemic is having on the older population, the NIA should be given additional resources to support related research. Within population aging research, NIA could use funding to enhance existing longitudinal studies, such as the Health and Retirement Study, to advance our understanding of the social, economic, and health implications of the COVID-19 pandemic, and the disparate effect that the disease is having on diverse older populations. As members of the Friends of NIA, PAA and APC have endorsed annual requests to provide the NIH with $500 million to support trans-NIH aging research. Given the widespread impact of COVID-19, the fourth relief package is an important opportunity to consider enhancing the NIH’s infrastructure and capability to support trans-agency aging-related research.

The NICHD is also well positioned to advance research on the short-and long-term effects of the pandemic on health and development of children, adolescents, and young adults. With a small amount of additional funding, existing studies, such as the National Longitudinal Study of Adolescent to Adult Health (Add Health) and the Panel Study on Income Dynamics Child Development Supplement, could quickly add relevant questions to measure the social, health, and economic effects of COVID-19 on children, young adults, and families. Additional support would also enable NICHD to enhance the infrastructure of the nation’s population research centers and galvanize their ability to develop and provide demographically-sound rates, risk prevalence estimates, and disease concentration projections as well as conduct collaborative research to assess the emerging life-time burden of exposure to the pandemic.

It should be noted that by providing additional emergency funding to NIA and NICHD, Congress would be preserving the ability of these Institutes to continue supporting its other critically important scientific research and research training activities, including data collection and dissemination, that must continue despite the urgency of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Thank you for considering our requests and your strong leadership during these uncertain and difficult times. PAA and APC look forward to working with you and your colleagues.

Sincerely,

Dr. Eileen Crimmins, President  
Population Association of America

Dr. Kate Cagney, President  
Association of Population Centers

cc: The Honorable Rosa DeLauro
    The Honorable Tom Cole
The Honorable Kevin McCarthy
The Honorable James Clyburn
The Honorable Roy Blunt
The Honorable Patty Murray