

April 3, 2020



The Honorable Nancy Pelosi
Speaker, U.S. House of Representatives
1236 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Kevin McCarthy
Minority Leader, U.S. House of Representatives
2468 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Mitch McConnell
Majority Leader, U.S. Senate
317 Russell Senate Office Building
Washington DC, 20510

The Honorable Charles Schumer
Minority Leader, U.S. Senate
322 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Speaker Pelosi, Leader McCarthy, Leader McConnell, and Leader Schumer:

On behalf of the hundreds of thousands of Americans living with lupus, we are writing to ask that any future COVID-19 response and recovery package include provisions to ensure lupus patients maintain access to one of the most important medications approved to treat symptoms of this debilitating disease.

As you may be aware, an increasing number of hospitalized COVID-19 patients as well as some COVID-19 patients recovering at home are being treated with an existing anti-malarial drug, hydroxychloroquine, more commonly known by its brand name, plaquenil. This treatment regimen is based on anecdotal evidence of efficacy and the good safety profile of this medication.

Like all Americans, lupus patients desperately hope that effective drugs are identified that will treat the virus, but as demand surges, it is becoming extremely difficult for lupus patients, many of whom have controlled their disease with plaquenil for years or even decades, to refill their prescriptions. We are very concerned about the potential for this shortage to cause harm to the patients who rely on it. We have heard that the Department of Health and Human Services accepted 30 million doses of the drug from Sandoz this week and we hope that this is an initial indication that the shortage is abating.

Knowing of the possibility that Congress will need to enact further legislation responding to the COVID-19 pandemic, we ask you to include provisions important to lupus patients, including:

- Funding to increase production and supply of hydroxychloroquine;
- Ensuring those using hydroxychloroquine to its intended uses are still able to access the medication and cracking down on instances of hoarding and price gouging.

Thank you for your work, and for your support for lupus patients.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Kenneth M. Farber".

Kenneth M. Farber
President and CEO
Lupus Research Alliance