

## More resources needed to help millions living with “long COVID”

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Up to 10 million Americans are likely to experience post-acute sequelae of SARS-CoV-2 infection (PASC), also known as long COVID, according to a resolution presented at the Special Meeting. And of those who had COVID-19, 10–30% experienced at least one persistent symptom up to six months after their infection was cleared.

These varied and chronic symptoms of PASC include neurologic, cognitive, cardiopulmonary, constitutional, musculoskeletal, psychiatric and mobility impairments, according to resolution presented at the June 2021 AMA Special Meeting.

The AMA House of Delegates adopted policy supporting “the development of an ICD-10 code or family of codes to recognize Post-Acute Sequelae of SARS-CoV-2 infection (‘PASC’ or ‘long COVID’) and other novel post-viral syndromes as a distinct diagnosis.”

During the AMA Special Meeting, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention released interim guidance on evaluating and caring for patients with post-COVID conditions.

“There is much we still don’t know about COVID-19 and while many people with COVID-19 recover in the weeks following illness, we’re seeing patients experiencing symptoms that either last, or appear, many weeks or months after becoming infected,” said AMA Trustee Sandra Adamson Fryhofer, MD . “Yet, our country currently lacks the necessary resources to adequately support and provide expert care to patients with long-haul COVID. That’s why we must continue following the science and conducting research so we can better understand the short and long-term health impacts of this novel illness.”

## Improving treatment for post-viral chronic fatigue condition

In a separate action, delegates moved to address post-viral syndrome, which occurs when an individual experiences overwhelming fatigue that does not improve with rest.

This condition also worsens after physical, mental or emotional exertion. Patients with post-viral syndrome also report stigmatization, marginalization and have higher rates of suicide. This is in part due to the lack of understanding of their condition by physicians and the public, according to resolution presented at the AMA Special Meeting.

To address the rise of post-viral syndromes and long-term sequelae, delegates directed the AMA to:

- | Advocate legislation to provide funding for research, prevention, control and treatment of post viral syndromes and long-term sequelae associated with viral infections, such as COVID-19.
- | Provide physicians and medical students with accurate and current information on post-viral syndromes and long-term sequelae associated with viral infections, such as COVID-19.
- | Collaborate with other medical and educational entities to promote education among patients about post viral syndromes and long-term sequelae associated with viral infections, such as COVID-19, to minimize the harm and disability current and future patients face.

Read about the other highlights from the June 2021 AMA Special Meeting.