# Dear Colleague Letter Template: Long COVID Communication

## About

This "Dear Colleague" letter template is intended to assist public health departments, health care providers, and community partners in addressing the complex and evolving challenges of Long COVID or post-COVID conditions. As millions continue to experience the lingering effects, this resource aims to consolidate guidance, share jurisdiction-specific services, and promote best practices. It is designed to streamline communication, facilitate provider education, and equip communities with practical tools to enhance awareness. This guidance is also helpful for other infection-associated chronic conditions, including myalgic encephalomyelitis or chronic fatigue syndrome.

## Instructions

Before customizing this template and to streamline the process, gather relevant jurisdiction-specific information, including local services, key contacts, and communication channels.

1. Ensure the introductory section reflects your jurisdiction’s tone and current priorities related to Long COVID response efforts.
2. Update the “Resources” section.
* Add jurisdiction-specific resources/links and remove placeholder text.
* Remove any section that is not applicable or update any generic entries under each section.
1. Adjust the “Additional Resources” section.
* If your jurisdiction has referral templates, outreach flyers, or translated materials, please include them. If not, remove this section or indicate that resources are forthcoming.
1. Review for consistency.
* Make sure that you have filled in all placeholders and that the information is accurate before finalizing the letter.

[Insert Your Jurisdiction's Name/Department]
**Date:** [Insert Date]

**Subject:** Long COVID Care and Support Resources – Guidance for [Insert Your Jurisdiction]

Dear Colleague,

Many individuals in our communities are experiencing ongoing symptoms consistent with post-COVID conditions, commonly referred to as Long COVID. These symptoms can persist for months or longer and impact individuals from all age groups and health statuses. Long COVID affects individuals across diverse populations, often resulting in a range of physical, mental, and social challenges that require coordinated, multidisciplinary care.

We are equipping you with new and consolidated resources, highlighting services available in our jurisdiction, sharing communication tools, and pointing to data sources that support response efforts. This information supports clinical care, public health programming, and public education surrounding Long COVID. It is also helpful for other infection-associated chronic conditions and illnesses, such as myalgic encephalomyelitis/chronic fatigue syndrome.

**What Is Long COVID?**

[Long COVID](https://nap.nationalacademies.org/catalog/27768/a-long-covid-definition-a-chronic-systemic-disease-state-with), or post-COVID condition, is a chronic condition that occurs after SARS-CoV-2 infection and includes a range of [symptoms](https://www.cdc.gov/covid/long-term-effects/long-covid-signs-symptoms.html) present for three months or more. Symptoms can relapse/remit and affect multiple organ systems, and commonly include fatigue, cognitive dysfunction (“brain fog”), shortness of breath, chest pain, depression, and others that interfere with daily life. These effects can be long-lasting and may lead to significant health, social, and economic challenges for individuals and communities.

The National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine convened a panel of scientific experts that developed a formal definition of Long COVID and recognized it as an infection-associated chronic condition in their comprehensive [report](https://nap.nationalacademies.org/catalog/27768/a-long-covid-definition-a-chronic-systemic-disease-state-with).

Ongoing Long COVID research aims to understand why some individuals experience prolonged symptoms after infection and gain insights from other infection-associated chronic conditions. Clinical trials within [the National Institutes of Health's Researching COVID to Enhance Recovery (NIH RECOVER) Initiative](https://trials.recovercovid.org/) are testing treatments to alleviate the effects of Long COVID. The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) has also issued [guidance](https://www.hhs.gov/civil-rights/for-providers/civil-rights-covid19/guidance-long-covid-disability/index.html) recognizing Long COVID as a potential disability under the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), clarifying that individuals may be entitled to protections if their symptoms significantly limit major life activities.

**Economic and Societal Impacts**
Approximately [400 million people](https://www.nature.com/articles/s41591-024-03173-6) (adults and children) worldwide and 20 million people in the United States may be affected by Long COVID. The global economic costs associated are estimated to be [$1 trillion](https://www.nature.com/articles/s41591-024-03173-6), including lost productivity and increased health care expenditures.

As Long COVID continues to affect millions with ongoing symptoms and new health challenges, providing trustworthy resources is crucial to support patients, inform health care professionals, and enhance public health efforts. By highlighting these key services and credible information sources, we strive to equip patients, caregivers, and providers with the necessary tools.

Please note that the resources provided are for informational purposes and do not constitute an endorsement by [Insert Your Jurisdiction's Name/Department].

**Resources for Providers and Communities**

To support informed decision-making and community education, we encourage you to explore and share the following trusted, publicly available resources on Long COVID. These tools offer up-to-date clinical guidelines and practical information for both health care professionals and the public:

* **CDC:**
	+ [Long COVID Basics](https://www.cdc.gov/covid/long-term-effects/?CDC_AAref_Val=https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/long-term-effects/)
	+ [CDC Science and the Public Health Approach to Long COVID](https://www.cdc.gov/covid/php/long-covid/index.html)
	+ [About Chronic Symptoms Following Infections](https://www.cdc.gov/chronic-symptoms-following-infections/about/index.html)
	+ [Manage Myalgic Encephalomyelitis/Chronic Fatigue Syndrome](https://www.cdc.gov/me-cfs/management/index.html)
* **NIH RECOVER Initiative (Research on Long COVID):**
	+ [RECOVER: Researching COVID to Enhance Recovery](https://recovercovid.org/)
	+ [RECOVER-TLC Will Advance Long COVID Research](https://fnih.org/our-programs/recover-tlc-will-advance-long-covid-research/)
* **HHS Long COVID Guidance and Support:**
	+ [Guidance on “Long COVID” as a Disability Under the ADA, Section 504, and Section 1557](https://www.hhs.gov/civil-rights/for-providers/civil-rights-covid19/guidance-long-covid-disability/index.html)
* **Administration for Community Living:**
	+ [Resources for People with Long COVID](https://acl.gov/covid19/resources-people-experiencing-long-covid)
* **Additional Research and Recommendations:**
	+ [Multidisciplinary collaborative guidance on the assessment and treatment of patients with Long COVID: A compendium statement](https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/full/10.1002/pmrj.13397?msockid=356c60def5b86e3021107525f43b6f7f)
	+ [Long-Term Health Effects of COVID-19: Disability and Function Following SARS-CoV-2 Infection](https://nap.nationalacademies.org/catalog/27756/long-term-health-effects-of-covid-19-disability-and-function)
	+ [A Long COVID Definition: A Chronic, Systemic Disease State with Profound Consequences](https://nap.nationalacademies.org/catalog/27768/a-long-covid-definition-a-chronic-systemic-disease-state-with)
* **[Insert Your Jurisdiction’s Hyperlinked Provider Toolkit or Patient Handout If Applicable]**
* **Sample Templates and Educational Materials:**
	+ [Providing Sufficient Medical Documentation in Support of a Patient's Accommodation Request](https://askjan.org/articles/Medical-Provider-Support-for-Accommodation-Request.cfm)
	+ [Workplace Accommodation Requests and Letter Template](https://stratishealth.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/04/Workplace-accommodation_Provider-FAQ-letter-template-.pdf)
	+ [Clinical Guidance: Long COVID Point-of-Care Resource](https://www.aafp.org/dam/AAFP/documents/patient_care/covid19/long-covid-point-of-care.pdf)
	+ [Updates in Long-COVID Conditions: Free CME](https://www.aafp.org/cme/all/covid-19/updates-long-covid.html)
	+ [Talking to Patients About Long COVID](https://www.aafp.org/family-physician/patient-care/public-health-emergencies/recent-outbreaks/covid-19/covid-19-clinical-resources/long-covid/talking-to-patients-about-long-covid.html)
	+ [Insert Hyperlinked Patient Intake Checklist If Applicable]
	+ [Insert Hyperlinked Support Group Flyer If Applicable]

**Key Services and Resources Offered in [Insert Your Jurisdiction]**

We have developed a variety of services to support individuals impacted by Long COVID. These services are designed to be adaptable to various health care settings and can be customized to meet community-specific needs.

* **[Insert Your Hyperlinked Jurisdictional Long COVID Page If Applicable]** – A centralized hub for Long COVID information.
* [**Directory of Long COVID Clinics**](https://longcovidalliance.org/directory-of-long-covid-clinics/) **by Long COVID Alliance** – Multidisciplinary care for complex cases.
* **Support Services** – Access to counseling, peer support, and other resources.
	+ [Mental Health Resources](https://www.cdc.gov/mental-health/caring/?CDC_AAref_Val=https://www.cdc.gov/mentalhealth/tools-resources/index.htm) by CDC
	+ [Long-COVID Alliance](https://longcovidalliance.org/)
	+ [COVID-19 Longhauler Advocacy Project](https://www.longhauler-advocacy.org/about)
	+ [Insert local hotline, support group info, or peer services]
* **[Insert Provider Network or Referral System If Applicable]** – Referral network for providers trained in Long COVID management.
* **Community Outreach and Navigation Services** –Outreach led by local organizations.
	+ [Insert info on CBO-led initiatives or local support lines if applicable]

**Data Sources and Tracking Tools for Long COVID**

Effective data collection is key to understanding Long COVID and improving treatment protocols. Here are several valuable data sources and tracking tools.

* **[Insert Your Jurisdiction’s Hyperlinked Long COVID Dashboard If Applicable]**
* [**RECOVER COVID Initiative Research Summaries**](https://recovercovid.org/research-summaries) **by NIH** – Highlights of current scientific findings.
* **Behavior Risk Factor Surveillance System (BRFSS)** – Administered by states with set questions each year, with optional state questions.
	+ [BRFSS State Information](https://www.cdc.gov/brfss/state_info/index.htm)
	+ [Notes from the Field: Long COVID Prevalence Among Adults - United States, 2022](https://www.cdc.gov/mmwr/volumes/73/wr/mm7306a4.htm)
* **National Health Interview Survey** – Prevalence reports for national data.
	+ [Long COVID in Adults: United States, 2022](https://www.cdc.gov/nchs/products/databriefs/db480.htm) by CDC
	+ [Prevalence of Post–COVID–19 Condition and Activity-Limiting Post–COVID–19 Condition Among Adults](https://jamanetwork.com/journals/jamanetworkopen/fullarticle/2828033)
	+ [Long COVID in Children: United States, 2022](https://www.cdc.gov/nchs/products/databriefs/db479.htm)
	+ [Long COVID Prevalence and Associated Activity Limitation in US Children](https://jamanetwork.com/journals/jamapediatrics/article-abstract/2829880)
* [**Long COVID Household Pulse Survey**](https://www.cdc.gov/nchs/covid19/pulse/long-covid.htm) **by CDC** –Historical population-level data (last updated October 2024).
* **State-Level COVID-19 and Long COVID Data Platforms** – Many states have integrated Long COVID data into their COVID-19 tracking platforms. Check with your Department of Health for specific access information.
	+ [Insert hyperlinked relevant platforms]

If your jurisdiction conducts local surveillance or qualitative assessments, we encourage you to share tools or findings with our network.

**Social Media and Public Outreach**

Social media is a powerful tool for raising awareness about Long COVID. Our jurisdiction’s platforms, including X (formerly known as Twitter), Facebook, and Instagram, regularly post updates and tips for both providers and patients on managing Long COVID. Follow us and share these posts to raise awareness.

* X: [@YourJurisdictionHandle]
* Facebook: [YourJurisdictionPage]
* Instagram: [@YourJurisdictionInstagram]
* [Insert your hyperlinked toolkit or [SAMHSA Long COVID & Behavioral Health Communication Toolkit]](https://www.samhsa.gov/about/news-announcements/coronavirus/long-covid/communication-toolkit)

**Suggested Hashtags:**

* #LongCOVID #PostCOVIDSupport #COVIDRecovery

**Video Campaigns:**

* [Insert hyperlinked campaigns such as NYC’s [Living with Long COVID](https://youtu.be/a3L3M1eoOL0?si=twD6JD1wgkNu9DXg), [MN Long COVID Social Media Campaign](https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLnv1INVkmxmv_j_01wAeJOyORPMm6t4V7), or other relevant examples]

**Templates and Resources** (remove if not applicable)

For your convenience, we have compiled additional templates and resources that can help streamline outreach and care coordination efforts:

* [Using templates to screen for and document COVID-19](https://help.practicefusion.com/s/article/Using-templates-to-screen-for-and-document-COVID-19) by Practice Fusion
* [Long COVID: A Guide for Health Professionals on Providing Medical Evidence for Social Security Disability Claims](https://www.ssa.gov/disability/professionals/documents/EN-64-128.pdf) by SSA
* Referral Templates for Health Care Providers:
[Insert hyperlinked downloadable provider referral templates or guides for Long COVID care]
* Outreach Materials:
[Insert hyperlinked customizable flyers and posters that can be distributed in community centers, clinics, or online]
* Translated Materials for Non-English Speakers:
[Insert links to available materials in other languages, if applicable]

**Looking Ahead: Next Steps for Collaboration**

We encourage all health care providers, public health departments, and community organizations to:

1. Share and distribute updated Long COVID materials with your patients and community members.
2. Participate in ongoing education and training.
3. Share feedback and additional tools that could benefit other jurisdictions.

We hope these resources will help you provide comprehensive care for individuals affected by Long COVID. If you have any questions or require additional assistance, please don't hesitate to contact us. For more information, resource sharing, or collaboration opportunities, please contact us. Thank you for your commitment to the health and well-being of our community.

Sincerely,
[Insert Your Name, Your Title]
[Insert Your Department/Agency Name]
[Insert Contact Info]