

DISABILITY AND REHABILITATION RESEARCH COALITION

1501 M STREET, N.W. SUITE 700 WASHINGTON, D.C. 20005

May 18, 2020

The Honorable Bob Casey
393 Russell Senate Office Building
U.S. Senate
Washington, D.C. 20510

**Re: Thank You for Prioritizing Disability Data Collection During the COVID-19
Pandemic**

Senator Casey:

On behalf of the Disability and Rehabilitation Research Coalition (DRRC), we write to sincerely thank you for your longstanding and ongoing work on behalf of the disability community. Specifically, we would like to express our appreciation for your work to ensure that disability status is collected and reported as a part of all COVID-19 related data collection. Your letter to Health and Human Services Secretary Alex Azar, dated May 13, 2020, is a critical step forward in ensuring that the federal public health infrastructure prioritizes the collection of this data to help understand the impact of the pandemic, especially on populations facing health disparities including people with disabilities.

As you are well aware, the COVID-19 pandemic is disproportionately affecting people with disabilities and exacerbating the existing health disparities faced by the populations DRRC member organizations represent. Not only are people with disabilities at higher risk for COVID-19 infection, serious symptoms, and comorbidities, but they are facing even further decreases in their ability to access needed health care during the pandemic. Ensuring a pandemic response that targets people with disabilities and other populations facing health disparities is paramount to mitigating the wide-ranging effects of this virus and collecting disaggregated disability data is a necessary first step in boosting that response.

We applaud your commitment to the disability population and look forward to continuing to work with you to advance public policy impacting people with disabilities. Thank you to you and your staff, and we appreciate your work in securing this important step forward.

Sincerely,

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