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## Patient Groups Call on Nation's Governors to Ensure Safety of All Voters, Including Those with Chronic Diseases

Arlington, VA - On Friday, October 2, 2020, 26 patient organization sent a letter to all 50 state governors, the National Governors Association, National Association of Secretaries of States and the National Conference of State Legislators encouraging governors to take steps to ensure that the most vulnerable populations maintain the ability to exercise their right to vote. The letter, in part, called on leaders to ensure these patients can participate in the upcoming elections and noted:

"Patients with serious conditions are currently very cautious about why and how often they leave their homes. To a greater level compared to the general population, patients with serious conditions have taken enhanced steps to work from home, utilize telemedicine rather than in-person doctor visits, and have friends or family purchase their essential items. It is important that states offer similar flexibilities for these patients so they can take part in the election process safely. It is important that in cases where rare, serious and chronic disease voters do decide to exercise their right to vote may do so in a safe manner. Finally, we recommend that officials establish procedures to protect voters during future pandemics."

This letter was spearheaded by the Arthritis Foundation, American Diabetes Association, and American Lung Association who added:

"Our community has told us they are scared- scared of contracting COVID and scared of spreading it to a loved one," said Ann Palmer, the President and CEO of the Arthritis Foundation. "We call on all governors to ensure that their voices are heard and that all people with rare, serious and chronic diseases can exercise their right to vote as safely as possible."

"People with poorly managed diabetes are at an increased risk of experiencing devastating health outcomes of the coronavirus," said Tracey D. Brown, Chief Executive Officer of the American Diabetes Association. "We must ensure that people with diabetes aren't forced to jeopardize their health in order to practice their right to vote and participate in the upcoming election. It is imperative that we take steps to ensure that the millions of Americans with diabetes can participate in this year's election - and can do so safely."

"All voters, including lung disease patients, have the right to safely cast their ballot this November," said Harold Wimmer, national president and CEO of the American Lung

Association. "The American Lung Association strongly encourages state and local health officials to ensure safe voting and to protect poll workers."

With less than a month until the election, these organizations urge states to take measures to protect voters and poll workers at greater risk of COVID-19. Read the full letter [here](#).

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#### **About the American Diabetes Association**

Every day more than 4,000 people are newly diagnosed with diabetes in America. More than 122 million Americans have diabetes or prediabetes and are striving to manage their lives while living with the disease. The American Diabetes Association (ADA) is the nation's leading voluntary health organization fighting to bend the curve on the diabetes epidemic and help people living with diabetes thrive. For 80 years the ADA has been driving discovery and research to treat, manage and prevent diabetes, while working relentlessly for a cure. We help people with diabetes thrive by fighting for their rights and developing programs, advocacy and education designed to improve their quality of life. Diabetes has brought us together. What we do next will make us Connected for Life. To learn more or to get involved, visit us at [diabetes.org](#) or call 1-800-DIABETES (1-800-342-2383). Join the fight with us on Facebook ([American Diabetes Association](#)), Twitter (@AmDiabetesAssn) and Instagram (@AmDiabetesAssn).

#### **About the Arthritis Foundation:**

The Arthritis Foundation is the Champion of Yes. Leading the fight for the arthritis community, the Foundation helps conquer everyday battles through life-changing information and resources, access to optimal care, advancements in science and community connections. The Arthritis Foundation's goal is to chart a winning course, guiding families in developing personalized plans for living a full life – and making each day another stride toward a cure. Visit [arthritis.org](#) to learn more.

#### **About the American Lung Association:**

The American Lung Association is the leading organization working to save lives by improving lung health and preventing lung disease through education, advocacy and research. The work of the American Lung Association is focused on four strategic imperatives: to defeat lung cancer; to champion clean air for all; to improve the quality of life for those with lung disease and their families; and to create a tobacco-free future. For more information about the American Lung Association, a holder of the coveted 4-star rating from Charity Navigator and a Gold-Level GuideStar Member, or to support the work it does, call 1-800-LUNGUSA (1-800-586-4872) or visit: [Lung.org](#).

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