# Engaging with the Biden Administration on COVID Priorities

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**Alec Bose:**

Following the release of the White House's National Strategy for the COVID-19 Response and Pandemic Preparedness, the College of American Pathologists responded to the Biden administration by outlining pathologists' priorities as government officials work to implement the strategy. The CAP's advocacy has included several touchpoint with the administration in Congress, explains Dr. Jonathon Myles, who is the chair of the CAP's Council on Government and Professional Affairs. In this podcast, Dr. Miles will discuss the CAP's actions this year to influence the government's response to the pandemic. Dr. Miles, thank you for joining us on this podcast. We're really excited to have you.

**Dr. Jonathon Myles:**

It's a pleasure to be here. Thank you.

**Alec Bose:**

So, with a new administration now in Washington, in the early stages of this presidency, how is the CAP engaging with the Biden administration?

**Dr. Jonathon Myles:**

As always, the CAP is focused on addressing the needs of our members. Our advocacy includes tackling supply shortages that we all face, reimbursement for COVID-19 tests, mitigating the regulatory issues that are before us and financial assistance for pathology practice. In addition, the CAP will be engaged on public health guidance, healthcare disparities, and global health security initiatives.

**Alec Bose:**

So in the early weeks of this presidency, what has the CAP done so far with its engagement with the new administration?

**Dr. Jonathon Myles:**

About a week after inauguration day, the White House released a National Strategy for the COVID-19 Response and Pandemic Preparedness. We responded at CAP to the strategy with a seven-page letter outlining provisions we support such as efforts to improve the supply chain for COVID testing and opportunities to make further refinements, such as providing laboratories with more accurate payments for COVID-19 tests. We at CAP are also tracking new appointments, executive orders, and other actions from the White House. In addition, we do remain heavily engaged with the new Congress to further advocate for our priorities.

**Alec Bose:**

So are there any areas that overlap between the CAP'S priorities and the new strategy from the White House?

**Dr. Jonathon Myles:**

In general, the CAP has welcomed the release of the strategy. In addition to issues concerning test supply shortages, we agree that patients need access to these tests and there is an emphasis on testing to assist in the reopening of schools. The CAP has also made several requests of the administration to support pathologists.

**Alec Bose:**

Can you discuss some of those requests?

**Dr. Jonathon Myles:**

We've called for financial assistance for pathology practices in need of additional resources to enable them to endure the pandemic. In addition, the CAP has requested federal student loan forgiveness or tuition relief to medical students and residents who are serving on the front lines of the pandemic. Now, the CAP has also requested that the government cover multiplex polymerase chain reaction, respiratory viral panel tests. Now, many respiratory pathogens present similarly in patients, and it is difficult to differentiate between influenza, coronavirus, the rhinoviruses, and many other pathogens without accurate testing. Ensuring rapid results with uniform coverage policies is essential to triaging patients and minimizing disease transmission. The CAP has encouraged the Biden administration to support efforts to extend Federal funds addressing the fiscal impacts of the pandemic, which includes support for medical examiner services, which are often overlooked.

**Alec Bose:**

Thank you. And finally, how can CAP members get involved in this process?

**Dr. Jonathon Myles:**

There is a lot happening during the first 100 days of the Biden administration. The CAP will continue to keep you updated with new developments through our advocacy newsletter and Twitter account. So please be prepared to respond to our calls to engage with the administration or Congress as needed. Finally, I'd ask my fellow pathologist to stay active by serving as a resource in your community on CDC guidance and encouraging those around you to obtain the vaccine once it is available to you.

**Alec Bose:**

Excellent. I think that's where we'll leave off. Thank you so much for sharing this update with us, Dr. Myles. We really appreciate it.

**Dr. Jonathon Myles:**

Thank you.

**Alec Bose:**

For more information about the CAP's advocacy activities, be sure to read our weekly advocacy update newsletter.