

January 21, 2021

The Honorable Tim Kaine
United States Senate
231 Russel Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Jack Reed
United States Senate
728 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Todd Young
United States Senate
185 Dirksen Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Bill Cassidy
United States Senate
520 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Senators Kaine, Reed, Young and Cassidy,

I write today on behalf of The New York Academy of Medicine (NYAM) to express our support of the Dr. Lorna Breen Health Care Provider Protection Act. Thank you for your wise and compassionate leadership in sponsoring this critically important measure to safeguard our first line of defense during the COVID-19 pandemic and in anticipation of future emergencies to come.

NYAM is dedicated to advancing health equity and ensuring everyone has the opportunity to live a healthy life. Our research, policy and programmatic work is directed toward those who have the highest hurdles to obtaining good health. America's frontline healthcare workers are often left out of the conversation about health equity, and that needs to change. Everyone has the right to good health, and this bill moves equity forward by ensuring our frontline workers get the protection and support of the legislature to build their mental health and well-being.

We support the bill's initiatives, which include establishing grants and training programs for healthcare providers to reduce suicide, burnout and substance use disorders; establishing an evidence-based awareness campaign to encourage those affected to reach out for treatment; and conducting further studies on the mental health of healthcare workers, including on the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Dr. Lorna Breen was an esteemed member of the NYAM community. In 2019 she was elected by her peers to NYAM Fellowship, an honor held by 2,000 of the most accomplished health and healthcare providers in New York. Dr. Breen had just started her journey with NYAM when the pandemic first ravaged New York City early last spring. I also experienced the trauma of working on the frontlines as I came out of clinical retirement to serve in the ICU at one of the city's safety net hospitals during the pandemic. Like Dr. Breen, I experienced firsthand the crushing emotional impact of the futility of being unable to help our patients get well and go home to their families.

Thank you for your leadership on this important legislation. Together, you are helping to ensure the health and well-being of those who care for everyone else.

Sincerely,



Judith A. Salerno, MD, MS
President

cc: J. Corey Feist, JD, MBA, Founder, Dr. Lorna Breen Heroes' Foundation