



February 24, 2025

President Donald J. Trump
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Ave
Washington DC, 20500

Mr. President,

There is a growing health crisis in the United States. A deadly fungal epidemic in the making that threatens high rates of chronic illness, death, and untold financial costs. We are just beginning to understand the true generational cost of the COVID-19 pandemic, and the country cannot repeat the mistakes that led to it.

The danger of deadly diseases is undeniable. Fungi are the only pathogen that is known to exterminate entire species, a reality that has been dramatized in the HBO series *The Last of Us*. While the fictional liberties of the writers differ from reality, the ease of transmission through the air combined with constant mutations of these deadly fungal infections suggest we could be facing a severe health crisis in the coming years unless immediate action is taken. The threat of contracting a deadly and incurable fungal infection is becoming increasingly real for all Americans. Some of the pathogens responsible for these fungal infections are now present in all 50 states and several have begun to emerge as life-threatening concerns for all U.S. citizens.

Many experts in the scientific and public health communities warn that the U.S. is on the verge of a fungal epidemic. Fungal pathogens live in soil and can spread hundreds of miles with hurricanes or windstorms, wildfires, or earthquakes. When combined with changing weather patterns, the results are new areas of the country becoming breeding grounds for deadly fungal infections every year.

This issue also presents a national security threat. The airborne nature and lethality of fungal pathogens make them attractive targets for weaponization by hostile nation-states or terrorist groups. Reports that Russia is investing in biological warfare agents underscores this concern.¹ All this at a time when ongoing conflicts in Ukraine and the Middle East are accelerating fungal resistance to the limited drug treatments available.

The economic burden of fungal infections is already staggering, particularly in western states, where the annual costs amount to billions of dollars. Each year, 6.5 million Americans contract life-threatening fungal infections, resulting in 75,000 hospitalizations,

¹ [Satellite Images Show Major Expansion at Russian Site with Secret Bioweapons Past | Stars and Stripes](#)



nearly 9 million outpatient visits, and \$6.7–\$7.5 billion in direct medical costs. Including indirect costs from lost productivity and premature deaths, the total burden is conservatively estimated at \$11.5 billion and could reach as high as \$48 billion. The cost is already staggering, particularly in western states, where the annual costs amount to billions of dollars. Without a coordinated national response, the health and economic consequences of this emerging crisis will be catastrophic. For example, the devastation caused by COVID-19 could have been exponentially worse had its severity and transmissibility matched that of the fungal pathogen *C. Auris*.

Unfortunately, the United States is not prepared to meet this growing threat. As with COVID-19, we lack the medications, diagnostic tests, and public health programs necessary to combat these infections effectively. The U.S. government also lacks a plan to close these gaps in resources. The US CDC's Mycotic Diseases Branch is the lone exception. It represents the only Public Health Mycology group in the world focusing on these diseases. A strategy that leverages this expertise with existing health, military and pandemic preparedness resources within the DOD and HHS could mean the difference between life and death for millions of Americans.

I am a survivor of Coccidioidomycosis, a fungal infection that has left me with chronic and debilitating health issues. To control my disease, I rely on intracranial injections with a toxic 80-year-old drug that is slowly poisoning me. Like many fungal patients, we find ourselves sitting at the intersection of infectious disease and chronic illness resulting from our fungal infection. My experience motivated me to create the fungal patient advocacy group **MyCARE** to help others and to push for a stronger national response. I am committed to ensuring that Americans do not suffer as I have.

I urge you to take action to address this looming health crisis before it spirals out of control. I stand ready to work alongside you and your administration to protect our country from this growing threat. Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Rob Purdie

MyCARE Foundation