

ASM Hails Inclusion of \$1.75 Billion for Viral Sequencing in COVID-19 Relief Budget Reconciliation Legislation

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The American Society for Microbiology (ASM) strongly supports the inclusion of \$1.75 billion for CDC's Advanced Molecular Detection (AMD) program as part of the Energy and Commerce Committee's COVID-19 relief budget reconciliation package. AMD is critical for genomic surveillance and sequencing of emerging SARS-CoV-2 variants. ASM thanks Chairman Frank Pallone and members of the Committee for addressing this urgent need as well as providing critical resources and support for COVID-19 testing and vaccine distribution.

"Funding for CDC's AMD program is key to ensuring that the U.S. is a leader in sequencing SARS-CoV-2 variants and tackling the pandemic," said ASM CEO Dr. Stefano Bertuzzi. "As new SARS-CoV-2 variants emerge, we need this sequencing capacity to identify, track and mitigate the impact of these new strains."

ASM is a leading advocate for greater investment in pathogen genomics and advanced molecular detection (AMD), and we commend the leadership of Representatives Ami Bera and Scott Peters, who introduced H.R. 791, the [Tracking COVID-19 Variants Act](#). We are pleased that the provisions of H.R. 791 are reflected in the Committee's reconciliation package.

AMD technology has and will continue to play a pivotal role in identifying and understanding new genetic strains of SARS-CoV-2 so that we can respond most effectively. Amidst the growing COVID-19 public health crisis, the AMD program established the [SPHERES Consortium](#) to bring the public and private sectors together to enable SARS-CoV-2 surveillance, sequencing, tracking and tracing. The work of this program also informs vaccine development and will help researchers monitor genetic changes in SARS-CoV-2 going forward as the population is immunized.

[Read more about AMD](#)

This legislation represents a real investment that will not only help us continue to address the COVID-19 pandemic, but also foster important collaborations among the public health, academic research and private sector scientific communities to meet the moment. ASM looks forward to serving as a bridge between public health labs and private sector partnerships in this "all-hands-on-deck" approach to genomic sequencing.

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The American Society for Microbiology is one of the largest professional societies dedicated to the life sciences and is composed of 30,000 scientists and health practitioners. ASM's mission is to promote and advance the microbial sciences. ASM advances the microbial sciences through conferences, publications, certifications and educational opportunities. It enhances laboratory capacity around the globe through training and resources. It provides a

network for scientists in academia, industry and clinical settings. Additionally, ASM promotes a deeper understanding of the microbial sciences to diverse audiences.