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Sheleen Dumas

Department PRA Clearance Officer Office of the Chief Information Officer U.S. Department of Commerce Washington, D.C. 20230

May 30, 2023

Re: Agency Information Collection Activities; Submission to the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) for Review and Approval; Comment Request; Household Pulse Survey (OMB No. 0607-1013)

Sheleen Dumas,

Introduction

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the upcoming revisions to the U.S. Census Bureau Household Pulse Survey (the "Pulse Survey"), proposed to be implemented in Phase 3.9 on or about May 31, 2023. I am writing to you on behalf of Pandemic Patients, which is a 501(c)(3) non-profit patient advocacy organization that works to relieve the harm caused by COVID-19 and Post-COVID Conditions. The U.S. Census Bureau has proposed several revisions to the Pulse Survey questionnaire for Phase 3.9. Some of these revisions are specific to COVID-19, including adding questions about the use of antivirals to treat COVID-19 and how households obtain COVID-19 tests. As a patient advocacy organization for people who have been affected by COVID-19, we respectfully offer our recommendations to the U.S. Census Bureau to improve the agency's efforts to fully understand American household experiences during the coronavirus pandemic. Further, we emphasize that the public's information needs have evolved over the course of the pandemic to require additional data collection regarding the long-term symptoms of COVID-19 ("long COVID" or "PASC").

1. The Household Pulse Survey Should be Continued

The U.S. Census Bureau's Household Pulse Survey is an important data collection tool that has provided invaluable real-time information to the public about the impact of the coronavirus pandemic on American households. As advocates for people who have been affected by COVID-19, we have relied on the Pulse Survey's findings when discussing COVID-19 with policymakers. Our need for this data has only increased alongside a rise in the number of Americans who continue to experience long-term symptoms of COVID-19 following an acute infection. We believe the Pulse Survey must continue to be administered regularly and we believe the value of the data greatly outweighs its cost.

2. Additional Information on the Coronavirus Pandemic's Impact on Children Should be Collected

The Pulse Survey has collected important information regarding children's education, nutrition, mental health, and vaccination against COVID-19. However, the questionnaire does not collect any data on children regarding COVID-19 infections or long COVID symptoms. We believe the Pulse Survey should collect this information.

Pandemic Patients | 1165 Broad St. #313 | Sumter, SC 29150 | info@pandemicpatients.org**3. Additional Information on COVID-19 Infections Should be Collected**

Question "VAC8_C" asks respondents to describe how long ago they experienced a COVID-19 infection. Revision 3.9 of the Pulse Survey questionnaire amends this question to allow respondents to select multiple options to indicate multiple infections across different time periods. We support the agency's decision to expand the data collected by changing this question. However, this question could be further modified to provide more robust information. For example, respondents could be prompted to enter a number in each category instead of checking a box. Thus, a respondent could indicate they experienced multiple infections "more than four weeks ago, but within the last year." Alter