

**Congress of the United States**  
**Washington, DC 20515**

September 18, 2023

The Honorable Kevin McCarthy  
Speaker of the House  
H-232, The Capitol  
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Hakeem Jeffries  
House Minority Leader  
H-204, The Capitol  
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Speaker McCarthy and Leader Jeffries:

As members of the California delegation, we are deeply concerned about the effect Valley fever is having on our state. We urge you to move legislation forward that would address Valley fever and antimicrobial resistance.

The fungus that causes Valley fever lives in the soil across the southwestern United States, and its reach is continuing to expand. When disturbed, the fungal spores circulate in the air, increasing the risk that humans will inhale them. Infections typically start in the lungs but can spread to other parts of the body. Symptoms can include fatigue, cough, fever, shortness of breath, and rashes. Some patients develop long-term lung problems, and the infection can spread to the central nervous system, skin, or bones.<sup>1</sup>

Cases of Valley fever have increased drastically over the past few years. Between 2001 and 2021, cases of Valley fever increased nearly five times. In 2021, there were 8,030 cases of Valley fever in California.<sup>2</sup>

Antimicrobial drugs such as antifungals and antibiotics are meant for short-term use, but some Valley fever patients must continue taking antifungals for months or years at a time. While antifungal medications are usually effective at controlling Valley fever, they do not cure it, leaving open the possibility of reactivating infections. We are deeply concerned that overexposure to antifungal medications will allow the fungus to mutate and become more resistant to therapeutics. Once pathogens become resistant to available treatment, there is little health care providers can do to care for their patients. Antimicrobial resistance kills approximately 1.27 million each year around the globe, including 35,000 people in the United States.<sup>3</sup>

We must invest in Valley fever medical countermeasures through antimicrobial research and development to ensure that Valley fever patients have the therapeutics and vaccines they need to live healthy lives. We look forward to working with you to advance legislation to address Valley fever and antimicrobial resistance.

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<sup>1</sup> CDC, <https://www.cdc.gov/fungal/diseases/coccidioidomycosis/index.html#:~:text=Valley%20fever%2C%20also%20called%20coccidioidomycosis,found%20in%20south%2Dcentral%20Washington.>

<sup>2</sup> CA Department of Public Health, <https://www.cdph.ca.gov/Programs/CID/DCDC/Pages/ValleyFeverDashboard.aspx>

<sup>3</sup> CDC, <https://www.cdc.gov/drugresistance/about.html>

Sincerely,



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Mike Levin  
Member of Congress



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David G. Valadao  
Member of Congress



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John S. Duarte  
Member of Congress



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Jim Costa  
Member of Congress



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Adam B. Schiff  
Member of Congress



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Zoe Lofgren  
Member of Congress



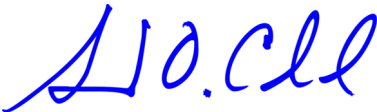
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Kevin Mullin  
Member of Congress



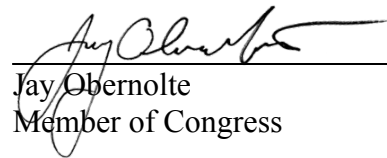
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Katie Porter  
Member of Congress



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Salud Carbajal  
Member of Congress



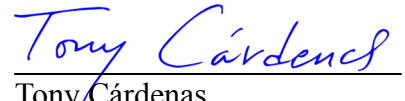
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Jay Obernolte  
Member of Congress



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Doug LaMalfa  
Member of Congress



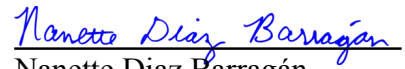
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Tony Cárdenas  
Member of Congress



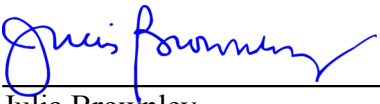
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Eric Swalwell  
Member of Congress



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Nanette Diaz Barragán  
Member of Congress



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Julia Brownley  
Member of Congress



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Josh Harder  
Member of Congress