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**MEDIA CONTACT:**  
Andrew MacPherson  
Founder & Co-Director  
202-420-8505

## **National Multi-Stakeholder Coalition Releases 2021-2022 Policy Priorities to Combat Social Isolation & Loneliness in America**

**Washington, DC** – Today, the Coalition to End Social Isolation and Loneliness, comprised of a diverse set of national organizations including consumer groups, health plans, health care providers, technology innovators, patient and family advocates, and community-based organizations, unveiled its 2021 – 2022 policy platform and recommendations for Congress and the Biden Administration’s consideration.

“Never before has it been more critical for the legislative and executive branches of government to work together to support Americans who are socially isolated or lonely, or both,” said Andrew MacPherson, Founder and Director of the Coalition to End Social Isolation and Loneliness. “Well-prior to the COVID-19 global pandemic, study after study showed the profound prevalence of social isolation and loneliness in America as well as the range of serious physical and mental illnesses that co-occur with these conditions, such as serious depression, dementia, and heart disease. We strongly urge Congress and the Biden Administration to act on the Coalition’s policy recommendations to fight social isolation and loneliness for all Americans.”

Recent studies show that millions of Americans are socially isolated, lonely, or both. The effects of social isolation and loneliness can be long lasting and are detrimental to one’s health and well-being. Research shows that social isolation can lead to a 29% increased risk of premature all-cause mortality, and loneliness a 26% increase. The risk associated with either social isolation or loneliness exceeds the effects of physical inactivity, obesity, and air pollution.

As such, the Coalition recommends the following overarching policy priorities for Congress to consider in addressing the long-term impact of social isolation and loneliness facing all sociodemographic populations in the U.S.:

1. Increase public awareness regarding social isolation and loneliness and its effect on health and wellbeing, including launching a national strategy to combat social isolation and loneliness in the U.S., as well as an inter-departmental and agency National Coordinator of Social Isolation;
2. Enhance social services and supports to address social isolation and loneliness by enhancing and/or targeting existing vehicles through the Aging Network, ACF, HRSA, HUD, DOL, and DOE, as well as state-level agencies, and mobilize community-based organizations;
3. Advance health services and supports that address social isolation and loneliness by implementing social isolation and loneliness screenings within various health care programs, including social isolation and loneliness within clinical improvement and quality metrics in Medicare and Medicaid, and streamlining data collection for social isolation and loneliness;
4. Leverage innovative solutions that foster connection and social integration, including remote patient monitoring and continuing reimbursement for telehealth;
5. Advance federal research to continue to develop the evidence base necessary to design effective programs and policies.

“Congress and the Biden Administration must act now and include these critically important policies to support Americans of all ages’ health and well-being,” said MacPherson.

*The Coalition to End Social Isolation & Loneliness brings together a diverse set of national organizations including consumer groups, health plans, health care providers, technology innovators, patient advocates and more to develop and advocate for federal policy solutions to address the epidemic of social isolation and loneliness. For more information, please visit: [www.endsocialisolation.org](http://www.endsocialisolation.org).*