



February 9, 2021

Dr. Marcella Nunez-Smith
COVID-19 Equity Task Force Chair

Dr. Cameron Webb
Senior Policy Advisor for COVID-19 Equity

CC: Bechara Choucair, COVID Vaccinations Coordinator
Sonya Bernstein, COVID Senior Policy Advisor
Osaremen Okolo, COVID Policy Advisor
Dawn O'Connell, HHS Senior Counselor for COVID-19 Response
AJ Pearlman, HHS Chief of Staff for COVID-19 Response
Kathryn Alvarez, HHS Deputy Chief of Staff for COVID-19 Response

RE: ACHP Health Plan Efforts to Combat Vaccine Hesitancy and Address Vaccine Equity

Dear Dr. Nunez-Smith and Dr. Webb,

Congratulations on your appointment to the Biden Administration's COVID-19 Equity Task Force. Your years of public service and health care leadership will well serve the enormous challenge of responding to the COVID-19 crisis and the significant equity issues it continues to expose. The Alliance of Community Health Plans (ACHP) appreciates the Administration's leadership in addressing the pandemic and continues to offer ourselves and our member companies as a resource.

As you know, ACHP is a national leadership organization bringing together innovative health plans and provider groups that are among America's best at delivering affordable, high-quality coverage and care. ACHP's non-profit, provider-aligned health plans provide coverage in all lines of business for nearly 24 million Americans across 36 states and the District of Columbia.

ACHP and our member companies stand ready to partner with the Administration on the COVID-19 vaccine rollout, particularly efforts to address vaccine hesitancy and health equity among our diverse populations. We share the Administration's goal of vaccinating all Americans and are committed to working with our diverse and economically disadvantaged communities to deliver timely and relevant information on the importance of vaccinations and their consumer-specific availability.

MAKING HEALTH CARE BETTER

ACHP members are actively administering COVID vaccines where available and taking action to address vaccine hesitancy and focus outreach efforts, including:

- Tracking COVID-19 infection and death rates occurring in Black, Indigenous, Latinx and People of Color and utilizing race, ethnicity, language and disability data to target outreach and vaccination.
- Prioritizing communication to, and vaccination of, Black, Latinx, Indigenous and other disproportionately affected populations through population health indexing, neighborhood deprivation scores and census information.
- Improving access to vaccine appointments, including vaccine wait-lists, calling consumers who lack internet access and offering interpretation services for non-English speakers.
- Partnering with stakeholder groups to amplify voices of Black physicians in local media stories and social media, resulting in significant increases of minority vaccination rates.
- Holding multi-language public town halls with labor partners to address vaccine hesitancy among health care workers.
- Conducting COVID-19 behavioral health surveys to better understand consumers' interest in getting vaccinated and pinpoint factors behind hesitancy.
- Instituting vaccine education sessions in nursing homes and homeless shelters for residents and staff to learn about vaccines and educate patients prior to clinics being established.

As integral community partners, ACHP members collaborate with local organizations to identify and address diverse needs. We hope the Administration will utilize our on-the-ground expertise and long-standing relationships as you work to address the COVID-19 pandemic.

The health care community will continue to face challenges in addressing disparities highlighted by the pandemic, stabilizing insurance markets and ensuring a smooth return to business. We appreciate opportunities for continued engagement with you and members of your team to discuss how we can further our shared goals. Please contact Michael Bagel, ACHP Director of Public Policy, at mbagel@achp.org or (202) 897-6121 with any questions and next steps for continued collaboration.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Ceci Connolly".

Ceci Connolly
President and CEO, ACHP