

Dr. David Kessler  
Dr. Vivek Murthy  
Dr. Marcella Nunez-Smith  
Co-chairs, President-Elect Biden's COVID-19 Taskforce

December 18, 2020

Dear Dr. Kessler, Dr. Murthy and Dr. Nunez-Smith,

As organizations that care about the well-being of immigrants and their loved ones, we write to you in concern that the over 44 million immigrants living in the United States may be unable to equitably access COVID-19 vaccines. Fears, structural barriers, and inadequate outreach may cause many to go unvaccinated and exacerbate the devastation and long-term consequences of this public health crisis.

Our country's policies and systems have led to greater health and economic harm in immigrant communities during this pandemic. If we do not actively account for these barriers, we can not expect the pandemic to end. We urge you, in your transition planning work and once President-elect Biden's administration has taken office, to prioritize immigrants and their families when planning and implementing a COVID-19 vaccine distribution program by taking the following actions:

1. **Outreach Must be Robustly Funded and Community Centered.** A successful campaign to vaccinate immigrants will require significant one on one connections initiated by non-government actors with trusted relationships. Often these are community, labor and faith organizations that lack the infrastructure and resources for large public education campaigns. The federal government must prioritize significant funding that is directed to culturally and linguistically appropriate outreach that prioritizes immigrants and other groups that have been disproportionately impacted by health disparities. For example, groups serving immigrants specifically from communities of color must receive resources as soon as possible to build capacity for outreach.
2. **Do Not Collect and Share Unnecessary Personal Information.** While the CDC's Data Use Agreement states that Social Security, driver's license and passport numbers will not be requested, federal, state and local health agencies must be required to safeguard all personally identifiable information necessary for public health purposes, such as address or date of birth. We are concerned that collection of identifiable information would be a deterrent for immigrants and other communities impacted by disparities. No identifiable information should be collected, stored or transmitted by any level of government beyond what is needed to ensure completion of second doses of a vaccine, monitor vaccine safety, and to analyze and report high level demographic disparities data. Concise consumer-facing information must be given to individuals receiving the vaccine about how their data will be used, including materials in-language and in accessible formats. Any existing or future agreements that share unnecessary data

should be terminated or modified to ensure such identifying information is not transmitted.

3. **Make Clear That No Data Will Be Used for Immigration Enforcement Purposes.** Federal, state and local health agency guidance and data sharing agreements must explicitly state that any data collected from vaccine recipients will not be shared with law or immigration enforcement agencies under any circumstances, nor with public or private entities that provide data to those agencies. These standards should be publicly available, to address vaccine hesitancy among immigrants for fear of enforcement purposes.
4. **Frontline and Essential Workers, Regardless of Immigration Status, Should Be a Priority.** The majority of immigrants in the U.S. labor force, 69 percent, are essential workers and are disproportionately medically vulnerable and underserved. Failure to ensure that they have equal access to the vaccine would leave a gaping hole in the recovery plan. Nearly half of the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA)-eligible population are essential workers; over 500,000 individuals. Older immigrants who are more susceptible to severe complications or death from COVID-19 often live in multigenerational households with frontline and essential workers. The Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices's decision to prioritize essential workers broadly for vaccination is an important first step, but the follow through must ensure that distribution is based solely on health considerations and infection rates, not immigration status, to prevent the spread of COVID-19, especially among communities prone to severe complications or death.
5. **Vaccines Must be Available for Free to Everyone, Regardless of Immigration Status.** Lawfully present immigrants are more than twice as likely as U.S. citizens to be uninsured, while undocumented immigrants are five times more likely. A primary cause of this differential is policy decisions to exclude many immigrants from public insurance programs. The pandemic cannot be stopped if cost and lack of coverage are a barrier to vaccination. The federal government must ensure that no one has to pay for a vaccine who can't afford to, including by clarifying that Emergency Medicaid coverage can and should be used to cover COVID-19 vaccination and by ensuring that provider reimbursement programs are not designed in a way to discourage vaccinations for non-citizens or people without a social security number.
6. **Policies that Chill Immigrant Use of Health Care Must End.** Immigration policies tied to use or potential use of public benefits, promulgated under the current administration, have led to a spike in fear among immigrants in accessing all types of health care. Fifteen percent of low-income immigrant families with children reported avoiding medical and public health programs this year. The public charge rules and forms, sponsor liability memo, and health care proclamation that have chilled immigrant access

to health care must be rescinded and enforcement agencies must end all actions around sensitive locations, such as hospitals and health clinics.

Sincerely,

### **National Organizations**

National Immigration Law Center  
A Better Balance  
ACCESS  
Advocates for Youth  
African American Ministers In Action  
African Communities Together  
Alianza Americas  
Alianza Nacional de Campesinas  
American Academy of Pediatrics  
American Civil Liberties Union  
American Federation of Teachers (AFT)  
American Humanist Association  
American Lung Association  
American Medical Student Association  
American Muslim Health Professionals  
Asian & Pacific Islander American Health Forum  
Asian American Legal Defense and Education Fund (AALDEF)  
Asian Americans Advancing Justice | AAJC  
Asian Pacific Institute on Gender-Based Violence  
Asian Pacific Partners for Empowerment, Advocacy and Leadership (APPEAL)  
Association of American Medical Colleges  
Association of Asian Pacific Community Health Organizations (AAPCHO)  
Association of Farmworker Opportunity Programs  
Association of Nurses in AIDS Care  
Association of Schools and Programs of Public Health  
Autistic Self Advocacy Network  
Be A Hero  
Bend the Arc: Jewish Action  
Black Women's Health Imperative  
Catholic Health Association of the United States  
Catholic Legal Immigration Network, Inc.  
Center for American Progress  
Center for Law and Social Policy (CLASP)  
Center for Popular Democracy

Center on Privacy & Technology at Georgetown Law  
Children's HealthWatch  
Church World Service  
CNLD: National Coalition for Latinxs with Disabilities  
Community Change Action & Fair Immigration Reform Movement (FIRM)  
Congregation of Our Lady of Charity of the Good Shepherd, U.S. Provinces  
Disability Rights Education and Defense Fund (DREDF)  
Disciples Refugee & Immigration Ministries  
Empowering Pacific Islander Communities (EPIC)  
Familia: Trans Queer Liberation Movement  
Families USA  
Farmworker Justice  
First Focus on Children  
Freedom for Immigrants  
GLMA: Health Professionals Advancing LGBTQ Equality  
Haitian Bridge Alliance  
Health Care for America Now (HCAN)  
Hep B United  
Hepatitis B Foundation  
Hepatitis Education Project  
Higgins Labor Program, University of Notre Dame  
Hispanic Federation  
HIV Medicine Association  
Holy Spirit Missionary Sisters, USA - JPIC  
Human Rights Campaign  
ILRC  
Immunization Action Coalition  
In Our Own Voice: National Black Women's Reproductive Justice Agenda  
Interfaith Center on Corporate Responsibility  
Jobs With Justice  
Justice for Migrant Women  
Justice in Aging  
Justice in Motion  
Latino Commission on AIDS  
LatinoJustice PRLDEF  
League of Conservation Voters  
League of United Latin American Citizens  
League of Women Voters of U.S.  
Lutheran Immigration and Refugee Service  
Medicago

Mental Health America  
Migrant Clinicians Network  
NAACP  
NASTAD  
National Advocacy Center of the Sisters of the Good Shepherd  
National Asian American Pacific Islander Mental Health Association  
National Asian Pacific American Women's Forum (NAPAWF)  
National Association of Community Health Workers  
National Coalition Against Domestic Violence  
National Consumers League  
National Council of Asian Pacific Islander Physicians  
National Council of Jewish Women  
National Domestic Workers Alliance  
National Education Association  
National Employment Law Project  
National Family Planning & Reproductive Health Association  
National Health Law Program  
National Hispanic Medical Association  
National Homelessness Law Center  
National Latina Institute for Reproductive Justice  
National Network for Arab American Communities  
National Network for Immigrant and Refugee Rights  
National Network to End Domestic Violence  
National Partnership for New Americans (NPNA)  
National REACH Coalition  
National Viral Hepatitis Roundtable  
National WIC Association  
NETWORK Lobby for Catholic Social Justice  
OCA – Asian Pacific American Advocates  
Partners for Dignity and Rights  
Partners In Health  
People For the American Way  
Planned Parenthood Federation of America  
Positive Women's Network-USA  
Prevention Institute  
Provincial Council Clerics of St. Viator  
Public Advocacy for Kids  
Public Justice  
R2H Action (Right to Health)  
Refugee and Immigrant Center for Education and Legal Services  
Service Employees International Union (SEIU)

Shriver Center on Poverty Law  
Sisters of Notre Dame de Namur EW Unit  
Southeast Asia Resource Action Center (SEARAC)  
SPLC Action Fund  
STChealth  
The AIDS Institute  
The Arc of the United States  
The Coelho Center for Disability Law, Policy and Innovation  
The Leadership Conference on Civil and Human Rights  
The Praxis Project  
The Workers Circle  
Treatment Action Group  
Trust for America's Health  
UnidosUS  
Union for Reform Judaism  
Unitarian Universalists for Social Justice  
UNITED SIKHS  
United We Dream  
URGE: Unite for Reproductive & Gender Equity  
Vaccinate Your Family  
Win Without War

**State and Local Organizations**

Asian Americans Advancing Justice - Los Angeles (CA)  
Bet Tzedek Legal Services (CA)  
California Collaborative for Immigrant Justice (CCIJ) (CA)  
California Immigrant Policy Center (CA)  
Central American Resource Center - CARECEN- of California (CA)  
Central American Resource Center —CARECEN SF (CA)  
Centro Legal de la Raza (CA)  
Coalition for Humane Immigrant Rights (CHIRLA) (CA)  
Community Clinic Consortium (CA)  
Council on American-Islamic Relations, California (CAIR-CA) (CA)  
Dreamer Fund (CA)  
Equality California (CA)  
Garment Worker Center (CA)  
Interfaith Movement for Human Integrity (CA)  
Korean Community Services - Orange County (CA)  
Latino Coalition for a Healthy CA (CA)  
Legal Aid at Work (CA)  
Los Angeles Regional Food Bank (CA)

Mujeres Advancing Leadership, Advocacy, and Success (CA)  
NorCal Resist (CA)  
San Bernardino Community Service Center (CA)  
Santa Clara County Wage Theft Coalition (CA)  
Services, Immigrant Rights & Education Network (SIREN) (CA)  
Center for Health Progress (CO)  
Coalition for Immigrant Health (CO)  
Colorado Association for School-Based Health Care (CO)  
Colorado Cross Disability Coalition (CO)  
Colorado Fiscal Institute (CO)  
Colorado Latino Leadership Advocacy and Research Organization (CO)  
Immigrant and Refugee Center of Northern Colorado (CO)  
Young Invincibles (CO)  
Ct Institute for Refugees and Immigrants (CT)  
Americans for Immigrant Justice (FL)  
Bilbao Law LLC (FL)  
Doctors For Camp Closure (FL)  
Farmworker Association of Florida (FL)  
Immigrant Action Alliance (FL)  
The Legal Clinic (for immigrant justice) Hawaii (HI)  
Children's Legal Center (IL)  
Illinois Coalition for Immigrant and Refugee Rights (ICIRR) (IL)  
Sisters and Brothers of Immigrants (SBI) (IL)  
YMCA of the University of Illinois New American Welcome Center (IL)  
Allston Brighton Health Collaborative (MA)  
Brazilian Women's Group (MA)  
First Parish in Brookline (MA)  
Immigrant Service Providers Group/Health (MA)  
Justice at Work, Inc. (MA)  
Massachusetts Jobs with Justice (MA)  
Massachusetts Law Reform Institute (MA)  
Metrowest Worker Center - Casa (MA)  
Union Capital Boston (MA)  
Welcome Project (MA)  
Foreign Born Information and Referral Network (FIRN, Inc.) (MD)  
Public Justice Center (MD)  
University of Maryland Carey Immigration Clinic (MD)  
Immigrant Legal Advocacy Project (ME)  
Michigan Immigrant Rights Center (MI)  
North Carolina Justice Center (NC)  
Morris County Organization For Hispanic Affairs Inc (NJ)

New Mexico Center on Law and Poverty (NM)  
Nevada Minority Health and Equity Coalition (NV)  
Silver State Equality-Nevada (NV)  
African Services Committee (NY)  
Arab-American Family Support Center, Inc (NY)  
Brooklyn Defender Services (NY)  
Cabrini Immigrant Services of NYC (NY)  
Catholic Migration Services (NY)  
Center for Independence of the Disabled, NY (NY)  
Coalición Mexicana / Mexican Coalition (NY)  
Commission on the Public's Health System (NY)  
Congregation Beit Simchat Torah (NY)  
Institute for Family Health/Bronx Health REACH (NY)  
Legal Services Staff Association, NOLSW/UAW 2320 (NY)  
Make the Road New York (NY)  
Mexican Coalition for the Empowerment of Youth & Families (NY)  
Mobilization for Justice, Inc. (NY)  
New York Immigration Coalition (NY)  
New York Legal Assistance Group (NYLAG) (NY)  
SEIU 32BJ (NY)  
Women for Afghan Women (NY)  
Advocates for Basic Legal Equality, Inc. (ABLE) (OH)  
Casa San Jose (PA)  
Asociacion Mayaguezana de Personas con Impedimentos, Inc. (PR)  
Caras con Causa (PR)  
Centro de la Mujer Dominicana (PR)  
Coalición de Coaliciones Pro Personas sin Hogar de PR, Inc. (PR)  
Concilio de Salud Integral de Loiza, Inc. (PR)  
Mujeres de Islas, Inc. (PR)  
NeoMed Center, Inc. (PR)  
One Stop Career Center of PR inc (PR)  
Proyecto Matria, Inc. (PR)  
Puerto Rico Para Tod@s (PR)  
Servicios de Salud Primarios de Barceloneta, Inc. (PR)  
Taller Salud (PR)  
Waves Ahead Puerto Rico (PR)  
Allies for Knoxville's Immigrant Neighbors (TN)  
Interfaith Worker Justice of East Tennessee (TN)  
TN Immigrant and Refugee Rights Coalition (TN)  
Equal Justice Center (TX)  
Texas Progressive Action Network (TX)

ACLU People Power Fairfax (VA)  
Dream Project Inc. (VA)  
Dreamers Mothers In Action (DMIA) (VA)  
Edu-Futuro (Educacion Para Nuestro Futuro) (VA)  
Friends United for Equity & Grassroots Organizing (VA)  
Legal Aid Justice Center (VA)  
PSELU572 (VA)  
Virginia Coalition for Immigrant Rights (VA)  
Virginia Coalition of Latino Organizations (VA)  
International Community Health Services (WA)  
La Casa Hogar (WA)  
Sheng-Yen Lu Foundation (SYL Foundation) (WA)