



The Honorable Gavin Newsom
 State Capital Building
 Sacramento, CA 95814

Dear Governor Newsom,

As leaders of California’s private health foundations, we share your vision of health equity and Health for All across our great state. We also support your administration’s efforts to infuse equity and full inclusion into the COVID-19 vaccine distribution strategies by targeting the most vulnerable communities and populations.

With the spirit of this goal in mind, we encourage your leadership in assuring that Federally-Qualified Health Centers (FQHC’s) and community of color -led non-profit Community-Based Organizations (CBOs) are prioritized for receiving federal funding that the state of California gets from the recently passed American Rescue Plan Act.

The success of COVID-19 vaccine distribution in communities of color and vulnerable populations is reliant upon “trusted messengers” who can break through the legacy and history of the structural racism that plagues our nation and our health system. FQHC’s and CBO’s represent the twin pillars of a robust “trusted messenger” equitable vaccine strategy, one tailored to match the epidemiology of California’s COVID pandemic. Our collective experiences statewide with successful ACA and Census outreach indicate that BIPOC-led CBOs were critical in getting the job done. While we are encouraged about new dedicated federal funding support for FQHC’s, we are troubled by the lack of targeted federal support for non-profit community organizations, and hope to see that these CBO’s are well-resourced for the critical weeks and months of vaccine distribution that lie ahead.

In partnership with Dr. Mark Ghaly, Yolanda Richardson and other state officials, California’s philanthropic partners have committed \$30 million to support COVID-19 education, outreach, and engagement targeted to vulnerable populations. While this philanthropic support, and existing state funding, is providing a baseline level of funding for vaccine outreach by some CBOs, it is not enough to reach communities of color in the depth and breadth that is needed. Thus, it is critical that this upcoming infusion of federal resources from the American Rescue Plan Act recognize the critical role that community based organizations play as trusted messengers – and that state, local, and public health system officials value their role in getting the job done of “vaccine equity for all.”

Sincerely, and in the spirit of partnership,

Judy Belk
 President/CEO
 California Wellness
 Foundation

Debbie Chang
 President/Chief Executive Officer
 Blue Shield of California
 Foundation

Sandra Hernandez
 President/CEO
 California Healthcare
 Foundation

Robert K Ross
 President/CEO
 The California Endowment

cc: Dr. Mark Ghaly, Secretary, California Health and Human Services