



PRESS RELEASE

New COVID Campaign to Provide Coordinated Statewide Public Health Response to Most Impacted Communities

For release on March 4, 2021

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Led by Public Health Advocates, a new *California COVID Justice: Recovery, Response & Repair* campaign will strengthen California's ability to reduce the spread of COVID-19 and build capacity in the state to address underlying systems contributing to longstanding health disparities. With guidance from a steering committee of community partners, targeted statewide and regional communications and policy strategies will rally support for needed policies, programs, and resources.

"I am pleased to see the public health community coming together to jointly advocate for the needs of communities hardest hit by the COVID pandemic. I look forward to hearing their recommendations," said Jim Wood, Chair of the Assembly Health Committee.

Throughout California, Latinx, Black, Native American, immigrant and low-income populations are experiencing significantly higher rates of infection and death due to COVID-19. Long-standing inequities caused by structural and systemic racism, poverty, violence and trauma, barriers to affordable and accessible healthcare and healthy food, greater exposure to environmental hazards, and resulting chronic disease have all put people of color at greater risk of illness and death from COVID-19.

"We must address the impact of COVID on our most vulnerable communities and develop a coordinated public health and equity response to the pandemic. The campaign will allow us to build a movement for advancing community-driven policies to mitigate COVID's now and perhaps other critical issues in the future," said Dr. Harold Goldstein, Executive Director of Public Health Advocates.

The campaign will be led by a Steering Committee which includes the following members:

- Genoveva Islas, Executive Director, Cultiva La Salud
- April Jean, Founder/Principal Consultant, Advocates for Action Consulting, LLC
- Melissa Jones, Executive Director, BARHII
- Rey Ruiz, Bilingual Contact Tracer, Public Health Institute
- Crystal Sanchez, Medical Assistant, Sacramento Homeless Union
- Karen Smith, Partner, Healthy Community Ventures
- Trinidad Solis, Public Health Physician, Fresno County Department of Public Health
- Kimberly Warmesley, City Councilmember, Stockton City Council
- Iliana Soto Welty, Executive Director, Multi-Ethnic Collaborative of Community Agencies

"COVID is impacting all of us in California, but communities of color are hardest hit. I applaud the formation of this new campaign and look forward to working with them as we develop long-term solutions to these and other health disparities," said Dr. Richard Pan, Chair of the Senate Health Committee.