



## PRESS RELEASE

For release on May 26, 2021

### For Media Inquiries Contact:

Brandie Campbell

Email: [bcampbell@phadvocates.org](mailto:bcampbell@phadvocates.org)

Cell: 559.994.3189

## A Proposed Legislative Fund Could Help to Close Racial, Health Gap

A groundbreaking California Health Equity and Racial Justice Fund, proposed by over 160 leading public health and equity organizations and advocates for inclusion in the California budget, will play a leading role in bridging the state's racial and health gap that largely impacts communities of color and underinvested communities.

"With an unfortunate absence of investments towards health equity in the Governor's recent revised budget, California cannot afford the same mistakes to underfund health equity and racial justice. This year's historic budget surplus offers California a pivotal opportunity to resource our communities for health equity with a dedicated stream of funding to help address and shift the root causes of poor health. Community-based organizations have been essential to our recovery from this global health pandemic and will continue to be part of public health as trusted messengers and experts of their own communities. Now is the time to fund community-determined, innovative solutions to bring about health equity and racial justice for our most impacted communities." - Dr. Jeffrey Reynoso, Executive Director of Latino Coalition for a Healthy California

Throughout California, people of color, LGBTQ+, immigrants, people with disabilities, and low-income community members endure some of the worst community conditions and barriers in access to health care, resulting in poorer health outcomes and shorter life spans.

These same barriers, caused by structural and systemic racism, poverty, violence and trauma, the lack of affordable and accessible healthcare, housing and healthy food, greater exposure to environmental hazards, and resulting chronic disease also put people of color at greater risk of illness and death from COVID-19. All of these deep-rooted issues over time have had a devastating impact on communities of color and underinvested communities.

The Fund builds on a current bill, AB 1038 (Gipson, Carillo), and focuses on both health equity and racial justice, which must go hand-in-hand. Funding would help to support community-based organizations, public

health departments, and tribal organizations who are doing on-the-ground work in their communities to address factors contributing to health and health outcomes, and systemic racism.

“Just last month, the Centers for Disease Control declared racism a public health threat. The state has an obligation to prioritize both health equity and racial justice – The California Health Equity and Racial Justice Fund does that.” - Dr. Harold Goldstein, Executive Director of Public Health Advocates

The \$1.25 billion ask includes:

- **\$500 million** to go towards a **Health Equity Fund** and support organizations to take action in reducing health inequities they identify at the local level, by using policy, systems and environmental changes to address factors closely related to health and health outcomes such as: 1) housing, 2) healthy food access, 3) economic stability, 4) schools and childcare, 5) community violence and other related issues.
- **\$500 million** for a **Racial Justice Innovation Fund** to support bold, innovative projects and partnerships that change statewide institutional, governance, and data systems for racial justice.
- An additional **\$250 million** to be invested in community programs that reduce specific factors responsible for the unequal burden of leading causes of death and illness among communities of color in California, including but not limited to diabetes and heart disease.

“Community-driven strategies, supported by this Fund, are absolutely necessary for marginalized communities to recover and sustain themselves in our current, turbulent environment of hate crimes, community violence and the impacts of COVID.” - Rod Lew, Executive Director of Asian Pacific Partners for Empowerment, Advocacy and Leadership (APPEAL)

“Our California Health Equity and Racial Justice Fund will recognize the ways in which bold, innovative and community-led programs can transform systems and improve health outcomes. Our institutions were not designed to advance equity so it is imperative that we embrace new solutions to eliminate racial health disparities. It's time for California to be all in for dismantling structural racism and building back from the pandemic in a manner that allows all Californians to thrive.” - Kiran Savage-Sangwan, Executive Director of the California Pan-Ethnic Health Network

This proposal is supported by: Asian Pacific Partners for Empowerment, Advocacy and Leadership (APPEAL), Black Women for Wellness Action Project, California Black Health Network, California Black Women’s Health project, California Latinas for Reproductive Justice, California Pan-Ethnic Health Network, Latino Coalition for a Healthy California, Public Health Advocates and Public Health Institute, Roots Community Health Center and Roots of Change.

###