



A Passionate Voice for Compassionate Care

June 10, 2020

The Honorable Kamala Harris
U.S. Senate
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Robin Kelly
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Senator Harris and Representative Kelly:

On behalf of the Catholic Health Association of the United States (CHA), the national leadership organization of more than 2,200 Catholic health care systems, hospitals, long-term care facilities, sponsors, and related organizations, I would like to thank you for introducing the *COVID-19 Racial and Ethnic Disparities Task Force Act (S. 3721/H.R. 6763)* and to express our support for this legislation to address the health disparities faced by minority communities during this pandemic.

Our members are committed to reducing health disparities and promoting health equity. We are guided by the principles of Catholic social teaching, including the inherent dignity of each person; the common good; and concern for poor and vulnerable. These values call us to refuse to accept the existence of racial and ethnic disparities in health outcomes, access to care and receipt of quality health care which stand in direct opposition to the mission of Catholic health care and the Catholic social tradition. The imperative to identify and eliminate health disparities has increased in urgency during this public health crisis, when communities of color are suffering disproportionately from COVID-19 in testing, treatment, and mortality rates

We support the *COVID-19 Racial and Ethnic Disparities Task Force Act* because it takes important steps to advance the use of data to combat racial and ethnic health disparities during this pandemic. The proposed task force will bring together health care stakeholders and public health experts to develop policy recommendations for FEMA and Congress in response to demographic data revealing high levels of COVID-19 related racial and ethnic health disparities in minority communities. The task force would also advise federal agencies distributing COVID-19 relief and stimulus funds on how to disburse those funds to address health disparities. Looking beyond the current crisis, the bill would also establish a permanent Infectious Disease Racial Disparities task force to ensure that in future pandemics, our health care system and emergency response addresses the issues of racial and ethnic health disparities.

Thank you again for introducing this important legislation and please contact us if you have any questions.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Sr. Mary Haddad". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first letters of "Sr.", "Mary", and "Haddad" being capitalized and prominent. Below the signature, the text "Sr. Mary Haddad, RSM" and "President and CEO" is printed in a black, sans-serif font.

Sr. Mary Haddad, RSM
President and CEO

CC: Members of the House and Senate