



A Passionate Voice for Compassionate Care

June 10, 2020

The Honorable Jahana Hayes
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Representative Hayes:

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 *Reducing COVID-19 Disparities by Investing in Public Health Act (H.R. 6638)* 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.

The *Reducing COVID-19 Disparities by Investing in Public Health Act* builds on the investments made by the Affordable Care Act (ACA), which created and bolstered offices of Minority Health at the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) and its various operating divisions. CHA was a proponent of the ACA which included language combating racial and ethnic health disparities. We strongly support the legislation's goal of increasing the annual funding for the Chronic Disease Prevention and Health Promotion Fund, the National Institute on Minority Health and Health Disparities, and the various offices of Minority Health within the Office of the Secretary of HHS, the Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services, the Food and Drug Administration, the Health Resources and Services Administration, and the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration. These agencies play a major role in understanding racial and ethnic health disparities, while also engaging in policy solutions towards their elimination. During this challenging public health crisis, it is vital that these office work to correct the systematic inequities faced by our vulnerable communities.

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

Sincerely,


Sr. Mary Haddad, RSM
President and CEO

CC: Members of the House and Senate