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National Hispanic Medical Association

February 10, 2021

Frank Pallone, Jr.  
Chairman, Energy and Commerce Committee  
U.S. House of Representatives  
2107 Rayburn HOB  
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairman Pallone:

On behalf of the National Hispanic Medical Association (NHMA), a nonprofit association representing 50,000 Hispanic physicians who are committed to improving the health of Latinos and other underserved, we strongly request your continued support to include targeted funding for Latinos, African Americans, Native Americans and Asian/Pacific Islanders in the Budget Reconciliation Legislation to address health disparities.

We also urge you to include grant eligibility for non-profit organizations to participate in activities and other activities such as contact tracing, community and mobile testing sites, mobile vaccine sites in medically underserved areas, public outreach campaigns to improve rates of vaccinations, community health centers, and recruitment for public health jobs.

We also support the funding for tribal health that is so needed – to increase testing, tracing, vaccines and education, mental health and IT structure.

All of our minority communities have many families with essential workers and are living in multigenerational households who face barriers to health care access and information about COVID-19 and, thus, they have been impacted far worse than the white population in the United States by the pandemic. Latinos have had 3 times the cases, 5 times the hospitalizations and 2 times the deaths according to the CDC – in the States and Territories that monitor racial/ethnic data for these items.

We also support the funding for nonprofit organizations as well as public health agencies to recruit persons from our medically underserved communities for a new public health workforce. The workforce would serve as case investigators, contact tracers, social support specialists, community health workers, public health nurses, disease intervention specialists, epidemiologists, program managers, laboratory personnel, informaticians, communication and policy experts, and any other positions as may be required to prevent, prepare for, and respond to COVID-19. NHMA has a College Health Scholars Program to mentor college prehealth students as well as our NHMA Leadership Fellowship to mentor mid-career physicians to public health leadership and a wide network of other committed organizations in our communities.

In summary, the NHMA strongly supports the effort to improve health equity related to COVID-19 I the Budget Reconciliation Legislation. For any questions, please contact me.

Sincerely,

Elena Rios, MD, MSPH, FACP  
President & CEO  
National Hispanic Medical Association