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July 1, 2021

The Hon. Chairman James E. Clyburn, Majority Whip  
Select Subcommittee on the Coronavirus Crisis  
U.S. House of Representatives  
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Chairman Clyburn:

The National Health Law Program (NHeLP) protects and advances the health rights of low-income and underserved individuals and families. NHeLP advocates, educates, and litigates at the federal and state levels to advance health and civil rights in the United States.

We write in support of the Select Subcommittee on the Coronavirus Crisis efforts to combat vaccine hesitancy. Near-universal vaccination will be crucial to overcoming the COVID-19 pandemic. However, for a variety of reasons, many people are hesitant to receive coronavirus vaccines, despite proven safety and efficacy.

An estimated 37% of adults remain unvaccinated, according to an ongoing survey by the Kaiser Family Foundation. Adults who want to "wait and see" before getting vaccinated are more likely to be young and people of color, while those in the "definitely not" group are more significantly Republican-leaning and in rural areas. (See KFF, [Does The Public Want To Get A COVID-19 Vaccine? When?](#), accessed June 28, 2021).

Researchers have also identified major contributors to vaccine hesitancy - misinformation, rumors, and conspiracy theories - particularly those circulated via social media. (See e.g., Islam MS, et al., [COVID-19 vaccine rumors and conspiracy theories: The need for cognitive inoculation against misinformation to improve vaccine adherence](#), PLoS ONE (May 12, 2021).

Earlier this year, NHeLP [filed a complaint](#) with the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services Office for Civil

Rights (OCR), the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA), and the Department of Homeland Security Office for Civil Rights and Civil Liberties contending that government agencies are failing to provide individuals with limited English proficiency (LEP) meaningful access to COVID-19 testing, vaccines, treatment, and contact tracing and that this makes it significantly more difficult for the nation's nearly 66 million people with LEP to obtain services. Overcoming and eliminating barriers to COVID-19 vaccines and other services is crucial to ending the pandemic.

Today's hearing by the Select Subcommittee on the Coronavirus Crisis, "Building Trust and Battling Barriers: The Urgent Need to Overcome Vaccine Hesitancy," will make an important contribution to combatting misinformation and conspiracy theories about coronavirus vaccines. We support a multi-prong approach for addressing vaccine hesitancy that includes partnerships with community organizations, dialogue-based interventions from trusted community messengers, incentives, and strategies to facilitate access to vaccinations for underservices communities. (See [Memorandum by Committee Staff, Hybrid Hearing on "Building Trust and Battling Barriers: The Urgent Need to Overcome Vaccine Hesitancy"](#) (June 28, 2021)).

## Conclusion

Thank you for holding this important hearing, and for your leadership in addressing the COVID-19 crisis. Please feel free to contact me at (202) 289-7661 or [turner@healthlaw.org](mailto:turner@healthlaw.org) if you have questions.

Yours truly,



Wayne Turner  
Senior Attorney

