

34th National Black Nurses Day on Capitol Hill

Theme: Health Equity, Nursing Resilience & Innovations: NBNA's New Call to Action

The Road to COVID Recovery

The National Black Nurses Association (NBNA) is very concerned with the ongoing COVID -19 pandemic, its disproportionate effect on communities of color, and all the recovery efforts being implemented. As the largest segment of the healthcare workforce, it is nurses who are the caregivers in most direct contact with those affected by COVID. NBNA calls on the 117th Congress to address the on going myriad of social justice and health equity issues that are hampering the road to recovery from this devastating pandemic.

Background:

As of mid-January 2022, there have been over 60.2 million cases of COVID-19 diagnosed in the U.S. and over 835,302 deaths. More than two years into the pandemic we are now dealing with spikes in infections related most recently to the Delta and Omicron variants which have had high levels of community transmission leading to record high numbers of hospitalizations. Even though vaccines are now available the road to recovery and full participation is mired in political rhetoric and partisan ideology.

- Over 246 million or 75% of the population has received at least one vaccination dose.
- Over 207 million or 63% of the population is fully vaccinated.
- Over 75 million or 22.8% of the population has received a booster.
- Vaccination rates vary by state, race/ethnicity, and age across the United States.
 - Vaccination rates are lower in southern states versus other parts of the country
 - Vaccination rates for White and adults of color has narrowed but Black and Latino children aged 5-11 have lower vaccination rates than White children.
- Historically populations of color experienced higher nationwide death rates from COVID-19 than White Americans
 - The Indigenous, Black, and Latino American death rate was 2.7 times higher than the White death rate at the height of the pandemic
 - Pacific Islanders were also 2.3 times more likely to die than Whites.
- Vaccine hesitancy and medical mistrust is higher in communities of color and must be addressed directly.
- Access to timely cost effective COVID-19 testing has been impacted by the recent surge in infections, laboratory staff shortages, and supply chain issues.

Recommendations to Legislators:

NBNA calls upon the 117th Congress to:

- Support legislation that will ensure that all Americans continue to have access to free COVID-19 testing and vaccines for the duration of the pandemic.
- Support legislation with the following provisions to ease the economic recovery from COVID-19.
 - Raise the minimum wage to \$15 dollars an hour.
 - Cancellation of student loan debt as students of color have the highest debt loads.
 - Extend unemployment benefits for those disproportionately impacted long term.
 - Continues rent and mortgage payment support for those severely impacted.

- Access to educational programs and retraining for those whose jobs have permanently been lost.
- Extended SNAP (Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program) food benefits for those in need of continued food assistance.
- Develop and support legislation to provide grant funding to continue to educate disproportionately impacted communities of color on COVID-19 transmission, mitigation strategies, testing, vaccines, and vaccine hesitancy.
- Develop and support legislation that directly augments the underlying social determinants of health (e.g., socioeconomic factors, education, employment, housing) that historically have disproportionately impacted Black and other communities of color that have made them more vulnerable to the COVID-19 pandemic.

References

CDC Coronavirus Diseases (2021). COVID-19 Data Tracker: death by race.

Retrieved January 14, 2021. <https://covid.cdc.gov/covid-data-tracker/#demographics>

Congress.gov

Retrieved 12/2020. <https://www.congress.gov/>

Coronavirus (COVID-19) frequently asked questions

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/index.html>

Egbert, A., Lioa, K (2020). The color of Coronavirus: 2020 Year in Review.

Retrieved on January 24, 2021 from: <https://www.apmresearchlab.org/covid/deaths-2020-review>

Mayo Clinic (2022). U.S. COVID-19 vaccine tracker: See your state's progress.

Retrieved on January 10, 2022 from: <https://www.mayoclinic.org/coronavirus-covid-19/vaccine-tracker>

Ndugga, N., Hill, L., Artiga, S., & Halder, S. (2021). Latest Data on COVID-19 Vaccinations by Race/Ethnicity.

Retrieved on January 10, 2022 from: <https://www.kff.org/coronavirus-covid-19/issue-brief/latest-data-on-covid-19-vaccinations-by-race-ethnicity/>

Saad, L., (2021). More in the U.S Vaccinated after Delta Surge, FDA Decision (Gallup.com).

Retrieved January 10, 2022 from: <https://news.gallup.com/poll/355073/vaccinated-delta-surge-fda-decision.aspx>

USA Facts. (2020). U.S. Coronavirus Vaccine Tracker.

Retrieved January 10, 2022 from:

https://usafacts.org/visualizations/covid-vaccine-tracker-states/?utm_source=google&utm_medium=cpc&utm_campaign=ND-COVID-Vaccine&gclid=CjwKCAiAz-OBhBIEiwAG1rIOiLoC_QEdEmxcc4GRVj_HAZw1_yWrNx8F81PII9uxVDkBrBv1A89ARoCkIUQAvD_BwE

World Economic and Financial survey for US population (WEO) (2020)

<https://www.imf.org/en/Publications/WEO/weo-database/2020/October>