

OPEN LETTER TO SACRAMENTO COUNTY BOARD OF SUPERVISORS AND REGIONAL HEALTH CARE PROVIDERS

The COVID-19 pandemic has had a devastating impact on the African American community. Blacks have disproportionately suffered in nearly every area: we are dying at an alarming rate, our children are struggling out of the classroom, our businesses are rapidly closing, many of us are going without basic needs and it is unclear when or how we will be able to recover from these difficult times.

It is during difficult times such as these that we need our systems and agencies to perform for us. However, data continue to reveal that despite our best efforts, they continue to fail us. The State of California recently announced COVID vaccine distribution data by race and ethnicity, and while Blacks make up about 10 percent of the County of Sacramento's population, we are only 4 percent of those who have been vaccinated. Across the state, less than 3 percent of those vaccinated are African American. It is clear that the first phase of the vaccine distribution effort has not been equitably distributed.

This has to change, and we must act now.

A fair and equitable distribution of the COVID-19 vaccine by regional health care providers and county health officials is just the first step in rebuilding the damage the pandemic has had on the Black community. We must make intentional efforts to make sure that barriers such as accessibility and the digital divide are not added to the misinformation and skepticism that could prevent African Americans from participating in the vaccination efforts.

We respectfully request that the following be addressed and implemented immediately:

- 1) Convene an African American COVID-19 Vaccine Committee to help inform steps the county and health systems will be taking to address the health crisis as it related to the African American community.
- 2) Establish regular and transparent dialogue with the African American community about the availability of state and federal resources that will be received by distributors to address the vaccine rollout;
- 3) Open multiple vaccination distribution sites in areas where the target population can access them — with particular attention given to our homeless population;
- 4) A review and oversight of the distribution plans and ongoing performance of health care providers and big-box pharmacy companies such as CVS and Walgreens related to the outreach and inclusion of African Americans;
- 5) Publish and maintain a comprehensive, up-to-date listing of ALL vaccination sites with dates, times and tiers
- 6) Launch a targeted community outreach and education campaign to motivate and inform the African American community to participate in the vaccination effort.

The signers of this letter — Sacramentans Advocating for Vaccine Equity (SAVE) — who are representatives of the African American communities throughout our city and county, on this date of February 17, 2021, are urging all of our elected officials, administrators and health system leaders to step up in support of the most vulnerable in our community during this crisis.

For further discussion please contact:

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Sincerely,

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