



May 28, 2020

The Honorable Kamala Harris
U.S. Senate
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Robin Kelly
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 25015

Dear Senator Harris and Representative Kelly:

On behalf of the American Academy of Family Physicians (AAFP), which represents 136,700 family physicians and medical students across the country, I write to share our support for the *COVID-19 Racial and Ethnic Disparities Task Force Act* (H.R. 6763/S. 3721). We appreciate your commitment to addressing the needs of vulnerable populations.

The *COVID-19 Racial and Ethnic Disparities Task Force Act* would establish an interagency, multi-sector taskforce to examine the health disparities associated with coronavirus and to develop policy recommendations. H.R. 6763/S. 3721 would also require that the taskforce include medical professionals, including those from rural areas. The U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) reported that there have been over 1.5 million cases of COVID-19 and 94,000 deaths. The agency also indicates that 29,000 new cases have emerged. Currently, we understand higher infection and mortality rates occur among racial and ethnic populations.

The AAFP supports the *COVID-19 Racial and Ethnic Disparities Task Force Act* because we share your view that our nation's pandemic efforts would be incomplete without strategies to reduce health disparities. The AAFP believes H.R. 6763/S. 3721 is important because the current public health emergency may impose indelible, long-term harms on those who have been historically disadvantaged. As with other adverse health conditions, the data show that COVID-19 outcomes are associated with individuals' social determinants of health, meaning the conditions under which people are born, grow, live, work, and age. To that end, it will be essential to develop recommendations that contextualize why disparities exist.

Again, the AAFP appreciates your work to address the needs of vulnerable communities through efforts to reduce inequities. For more information, please contact Sonya Clay, Government Relations Representative, at 202-655-4905 or sclay@aafp.org.

Sincerely,

John S. Cullen, MD, FAAFP
Board Chair

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