

**The Honorable Charles Schumer**

Senate Majority Leader  
Washington, DC 20510

**The Honorable Mitch McConnell**

Senate Minority Leader  
Washington, DC 20510

**The Honorable Ron Wyden**

Chairman  
Senate Committee on Finance  
Washington, DC 20510

**The Honorable Mike Crapo**

Ranking Member  
Senate Committee on Finance  
Washington, DC 20510

**The Honorable Patty Murray**

Chairman  
Senate Committee on Health,  
Education, Labor, and Pensions  
Washington, DC 20510

**The Honorable Richard Burr**

Ranking Member  
Senate Committee on Health,  
Education, Labor, and Pensions  
Washington, DC 20510

**February 22, 2021**

Dear Leaders Schumer and McConnell, Chairmen Wyden and Murray,  
and Ranking Members Crapo and Burr,

As public health experts and professionals, we write to urge that you swiftly consider and confirm President Joe Biden's nominee for Secretary of the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS), California Attorney General Xavier Becerra. It has been roughly one month since Joe Biden was sworn in as president. Given the once-in-a-century pandemic that has infected roughly 80 million Americans and caused the death of more than 500,000 Americans, it is critical that the Department have leadership in place to guide and coordinate the federal response and oversee many of the nation's most urgent priorities, including the administration of COVID-19 vaccines, the safe return to in-person learning, and ensuring Americans can sign-up for health coverage during the recently launched Special Enrollment Period.

HHS is charged with protecting the health of the nation and providing essential human services to the American people. The role of the Secretary has never been more critical as it is now – given the responsibility for managing efforts between its vital agencies, including the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, the Food and Drug Administration, the U.S. Public Health Service, the National Institutes of Health, the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services, and the Administration for Community Living. Each of these agencies will play a critical role in the Biden-Harris administration's policy responses to COVID-19, from CDC's role in tracking the virus and supporting state and local health departments, CMS's role in providing health insurance to tens of millions of Americans, and the FDA's role in evaluating new treatments and vaccines.

Attorney General Becerra is the leader the Department needs during this crisis. As California's Attorney General he has not only led the nation's second-largest law enforcement agency but also prioritized actions to protect the health of Californians. His health care legacy includes challenging

efforts to overturn the Affordable Care Act (ACA) and actions by drug manufacturers to keep lower-cost generic drugs from entering the market. He also secured a \$575 million settlement with Sutter Health, one of California's largest hospital chains, after arguing the system was driving up the costs of medical care.

Even before his tenure as California's Attorney General, Mr. Becerra has been a health care leader. Attorney General Becerra's longstanding commitment to addressing health inequities will ensure that the Department's response to the COVID-19 pandemic is centered on the communities hardest hit by the crisis. And his service on the Ways and Means Committee has given him a deep understanding of the federal health care programs he will be charged with overseeing as Secretary. Throughout his years in public service, Mr. Becerra has consistently sought out consensus solutions, including reaching across the aisle to find areas of common interest. During the debate over the ACA, then-Congressman Becerra helped resolve a dispute between members from rural and urban areas about the appropriate allocation of Medicare payments. Most recently, he has joined broad coalitions of attorneys general to advocate for a more robust COVID-19 federal response, such as leading a multistate, bipartisan effort with Louisiana Attorney General Jeff Landry to urge the federal government to use its legal authority to increase the availability of the COVID-19 treatment, Remdesivir.

As the Biden administration enters its second month, it is deeply alarming that the Senate has yet to confirm Mr. Becerra. We urge the Senate to act quickly to ensure that the Department has in place a capable and compassionate leader at its helm.

Sincerely,

Stacy Abrams, Physician Assistant, Columbia University in the City of New York

Karlotta Bartholomew, Psychologist, Former Kaiser Permanente Psychologist

Carol Allen, MD, Retired

William Beardslee, Director, Baer Prevention Initiatives, Boston Children's Hospital

Ivy Allen, President, Foundation for the Mid South

Pamela Behrman, PhD/Adjunct Professor, Department of Psychology, College of Mt. St. Vincent

Luzann Ampadu, FNP-BC, Highland Family Medicine

Ann Behrmann, MD, Pediatrician, ICATCH Program Director

Mari Armstrong-Hough, Assistant Professor, NYU School of Global Public Health

Leo Beletsky, Professor of Law and Health Sciences, Northeastern University

Marice Ashe, Lecturer, Public Health Law, UC Berkeley Law

Trude Bennett, Associate Professor Emerita, Gillings School of Global Public Health, University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill

Heather Barr, RN, Public Health Services Supervisor, Heather

Cheryl Berenson, Public Health Nurse  
Practitioner, RN, MS, MPH, Seattle King  
County Public Health Reserve Corps/  
Medical Reserve Corps

Barbara Berney, Producer, Power to Heal:  
Medicare and the Civil Rights Revolution;  
Associate Professor of Public Health Policy,  
City University of New York (Emeritus),  
BLB Productions

Robert Berry, MD, Attending Physician, CHA

Sierra Black, Clinical Social Worker, Cambridge  
Health Alliance

Susan Bonadonna, MD, Montefiore  
Medical Center

Julia Boyle, Psychology Postdoctoral Fellow

Paula Braveman, Professor of Family &  
Community Medicine, University of California,  
San Francisco

Elizabeth Brown, MD, MPH, Associate  
Professor, University of Rochester

Loraa Burke, Professor of Nursing and  
Epidemiology, University of Pittsburgh

Scott Burris, Professor of Law and Public  
Health, Temple Law School

Robert Byron, MD, MPH

Jesus Casas, Retired Psychologist, University  
of California, Santa Barbara

Sara Casey, Assistant Professor, Heilbrunn  
Department of Population and Family Health,  
Mailman School of Public Health, Columbia  
University

David Celentano, Professor and Chair,  
Epidemiology, Johns Hopkins Bloomberg  
School of Public Health

Susan Cheng, Associate Professor and Chair,  
Benedictine University

Andrew Young Choi, Ph.D., Psychologist  
Fellow, The University of Hawai'i at Mānoa

Kim Clark, Attorney, Legal Voice

Nancy Connolly, Clinical Assistant Professor  
of Medicine, University of Washington

Robin Cooper, Associate Professor of  
Psychiatry, Physician

Dominick DeFelice, Physician, University  
of Rochester

Carlos del Rio, Distinguished Professor,  
Emory University

Mary Dewar, Nurse Educator for Public Health  
Nursing (Retired), PNHP Metro

Victoria DiCicco, PhD, Clinical Psychologist,  
Retired

George DuPaul, Professor and Associate Dean  
for Research, College of Education, Lehigh  
University

Maria Ekstrand, Professor, University of  
California, San Francisco

Ronald Epstein, Professor of Family Medicine,  
University of Rochester

Kathleen Fagan, MD, MPH

Joe Feinglass, Research Professor of Medicine,  
Northwestern University Feinberg School of  
Medicine

Marie Fioravanti, Director of Nursing,  
University of Pittsburgh School of Nursing

Joan Fiorello, Ph.D.

Kevin Fiscella, Professor, Family Medicine and  
Public Health Sciences, University of Rochester  
Medical Center

Rachael Fite, Clinical Psychologist, Private  
Practice

Kenneth Freedland, Professor, Washington  
University School of Medicine

Bryony Freij, LCSW, Private Practitioner

Emily Galpern, Public Health Consultant, Emily  
Galpern Consulting

Shelley Geballe, Assistant Professor of Clinical  
Public Health, Yale School of Public Health

Elizabeth Gershoff, Professor, University of  
Texas at Austin

Robyn Gershon, Clinical Professor, NYU  
College of Global Public Health

Carly Goldstein, Assistant Professor (Research)  
and Research Scientist, Alpert Medical School  
of Brown University/The Miriam Hospital

Andrew Goldstein, MD, Assistant Professor,  
NYU School of Medicine

Gregg Gonsalves, Assistant Professor,  
Yale School of Public Health

Gail Goodman, Distinguished Professor of  
Psychology, University of California, Davis

Rhoda Goodwin, Ph.D., Psychologist

Andrea Gordon, Faculty Physician, Tufts  
University Family Medicine Residency at  
Cambridge Health Alliance

Scott Greer, Professor, Health Management  
and Policy, University of Michigan

Jodie Guest, Professor and Vice Chair,  
Department of Epidemiology, Emory  
University School of Medicine and Rollins  
School of Public Health

Vincent Guilamo, Professor, NYU

Jhumka Gupta, Associate Professor, George  
Mason University

Ravi Gupta, Physician, NCSP, University  
of Pennsylvania

Michael Gusmano, Professor, Rutgers  
University

Perry Halkitis, Dean & Professor, School  
of Public Health, Rutgers University

Lindsay Heckler, Supervising Attorney,  
Center for Elder Law & Justice

Tamara Henry, Professor, George Washington  
University

Jennifer Hirsch, Professor of Sociomedical  
Sciences, Mailman School of Public Health,  
Columbia University

Natalie Hogan, RN

Jennifer Huer, Managing Director, Center for Health Policy and Law at Northeastern University School of Law

Samuel Jackson, MD, Kings County Hospital Center

Peter Jacobson, Professor Emeritus of Health Law and Policy, University of Michigan School of Public Health

Elizabeth Jarpe, Clinical Assistant Professor, University of Illinois at Chicago

Jonathan Kahn, Professor of Law and Biology, Northeastern University

Leslie Kantor, Professor and Chair, Department of Urban-Global Public Health, Rutgers University School of Public Health

Matthew Kavanagh, Assistant Professor, Georgetown University

Susan Kegeles, Professor Emerita, Department of Medicine, University of California San Francisco

Albert Ko, Professor and Department Chair, Yale School of Public Health

Margaret Kozel, Pediatrician, Retired

Barbara Kraft, MSW, Retired

Nancy Krieger, Professor of Social Epidemiology, Harvard T.H. Chan School of Public Health

Sunny Kung, Resident Physician, Brigham and Women's Hospital

Theanvy Kuoch, Executive Director, Khmer Health Advocates

Joseph Ladines-Lim, Resident Physician, Michigan Medicine

Marc Laviates, MD, Physicians for a National Health Program

Jane Leavitt, ARNP, Retired

Jane Lester, MD, Seattle King County Public Health

Jeffrey Levi, Professor of Health Policy and Management, George Washington University School of Public Health

Beth Linas, Infectious Disease Epidemiologist, Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health

David Loud, Retired, Health Care Is a Human Right WA

Mark Lowenthal, Psychologist, NJPA

Karina Maher, Physician

Duncan Maru, Associate Professor, Mount Sinai School of Medicine & NYC H&H/Elmhurst Hospital Center

Marilyn Matthews, MD, Self Employed

Kenneth Mayer, Medical Research Director and Professor, Fenway Health/Harvard Medical School

Amy Mayfield, Family Nurse Practitioner, NPA

Ann Mayo, Professor of Nursing, University of San Diego

Mary Ann McCabe, PhD, ABPP, Associate Clinical Professor of Pediatrics, George Washington University School of Medicine

Therese McGinn, Professor Emerita, Mailman School of Public Health, Columbia University	Susan Opotow, Professor, John Jay College, City University of New York
Aimee McHale, Assistant Professor, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill	Melissa Palma, MD, MPH, Council of Young Filipinx Americans in Medicine
James McKeever, Pediatric Psychologist, Seattle Children's Hospital	Wendy Parmet, Professor of Law, Northeastern University
Molly McNulty, Assistant Professor of Public Health Law and Policy, University of Rochester	Terence Patterson, Psychologist, USF
Gail McVey, Psychologist, Gail McVey, Psy.D. LLC	Joanna Perkins, Medical Director, Hematology-Oncology, PRA Health Sciences
Emily Mendenhall, Provost's Distinguished Associate Professor, School of Foreign Service, Georgetown University	Janet Perlman, Physician, Stanford Children's Health
Angelica Millan, Registered Nurse and Nursing Faculty, Los Angeles County Community Colleges	Nina Piazza, MD, Family Physician, University of Rochester
Shan Mohammed, Clinical Professor, Northeastern University	Tonia Poteat, Assistant Professor, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, School of Medicine
Marjaneh Moini, MD, JMH	Tracy Rabin, Associate Professor of Medicine, Yale University School of Medicine
Donald Moss, Dean, College of Integrative Medicine and Health Sciences, Saybrook University	Michele Ribeiro, Licensed Psychologist, APA Div 49
Elizabeth Naumburg, Associate Dean, Advising; Professor of Family Medicine, University of Rochester	Kayla Ringelheim, MBA, MPH, Yale University
Gina Novick, Associate Professor, Yale School of Nursing	Tamara Rissman, Epidemiologist, CT Emerging Infections Program
Joseph Nunes, Ph.D., Practicing Mental Health Clinician	Cheryl Ritenbaugh, Professor Emerita of Family and Community Medicine, University of Arizona
Iyabo Obasanjo, Assistant Professor, College of William and Mary	Dr. Ellen Rosenberg, The Chicago Psychoanalytic Institute
	Margie Sable, Professor Emerita, Retired Social Work

Elizabeth Samuels, Assistant Professor of  
Emergency Medicine, Brown Emergency  
Medicine

Javier Sanchez, MD, Associate Professor of  
Family Medicine, UC Riverside School of  
Medicine, Southern California Permanente  
Medicine, UC Riverside School of Medicine

Andrew Saxon, MD, Professor and Director,  
University of Washington School of Medicine/  
VA Puget Sound Health Care System

Manisha Sharma, MD, FAAFP, Physician

Mark Siegel, MD, Professor of Medicine,  
Yale School of Medicine

Vincent Silenzio, Professor of Urban-Global  
Public Health, Rutgers University

Jennifer Silverstein, LCSW

Robin Simon, Professor of Sociology, Wake  
Forest University

Heidi Sinclair, MD, Doctors for America;  
American College of Physicians

Nirbhay Singh, Professor, Augusta University

Stephen Soldz, Professor and Director  
of Research, Boston Graduate School of  
Psychoanalysis

Sandra Springer, MD, Associate Professor  
of Medicine, Yale School of Medicine

Sanjeev Sriram, Senior Advisor, Social Security  
Works

Catherine Stanger, Associate Professor, Geisel  
School of Medicine at Dartmouth

Steffanie Strathdee, Associate Dean, Global  
Health Sciences, University of California,  
San Diego

Lara Sucheston-Campbell, Associate Professor,  
The Ohio State University

Mary Tinetti, Professor of Medicine and Public  
Health, Yale School of Medicine

Kelly Vinehout, Clinical Psychologist, IL  
Psychological Association

Anna Walden, Psychologist

Echo Warner, Postdoctoral Research Associate,  
University of Arizona Cancer Center

William Watson, Psychologist, Associate  
Professor of Psychiatry and Neurology,  
University of Rochester Medical Center

Linda Webb, LCSW, Clinical Social Worker,  
Catskill Addiction Coalition

Judy Wessler, Retired Community Health  
Policy Director

Jennifer Weuve, Associate Professor, Boston  
University School of Public Health

Amy Williams, Clinical Health Psychologist,  
Henry Ford Health System

Kathryn Wouk, PhD, Postdoc