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CENTER *for* HEALTH EQUITY

## Addressing Health Disparities in the Era of COVID-19

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## From Health Disparities to Health Equity

### Health Disparities:

"...**preventable** differences in the burden of disease, injury, violence, or opportunities to achieve optimal health that are experienced by socially disadvantaged populations"<sup>1</sup>



### Health Equity:

"When **every person** has the **opportunity to 'attain his or her full health potential'** and no one is 'disadvantaged from achieving this potential because of social position or other socially determined circumstances"<sup>2</sup>

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1. Community Health and Program Services (CHAPS): Health Disparities Among Racial/Ethnic Populations. U.S. Department of Health and Human Services; 2008.  
2. Whitehead M, Dahlgren G. Levelling Up (Part 1): A Discussion Paper on Concepts and Principles for Tackling Social Inequities in Health. World Health Organization. Available at <http://www.euro.who.int/document/e89383.pdf>.

# Heart Disease COVID-19

# Cancer MATERNAL MORTALITY Diabetes

# PERIODONTITIS Stroke Trauma

# H Asthma Infectious Diseases

# I Kidney Disease Hypertension Smoking

# V DEPRESSION Infant Mortality TEEN BIRTH RATES

# O B E S I T Y

## In Baltimore

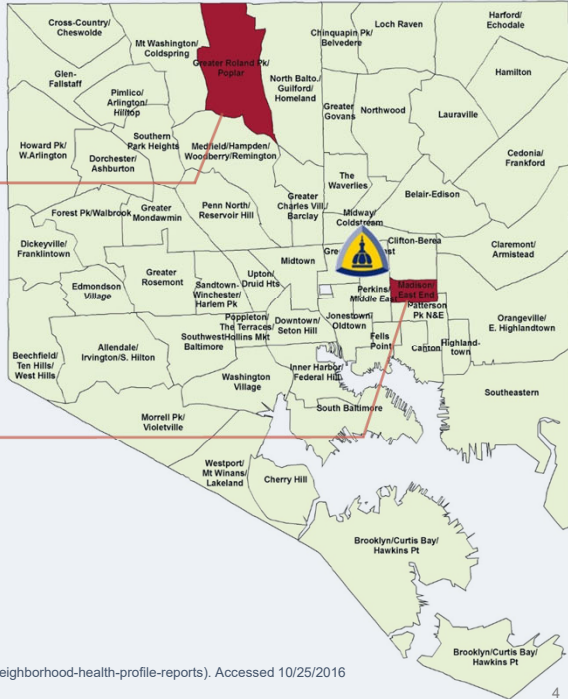
Even 5 miles makes a world of difference ...

### ROLAND PARK

79.5% WHITE  
 INCOME: \$90,492  
 UNEMPLOYMENT: 3.4%  
 HOMICIDE RATE: 4.1/10,000

### MADISON/EAST END

91.1% BLACK OR AFRICAN AMERICAN  
 INCOME: \$30,389  
 UNEMPLOYMENT: 14.4%  
 HOMICIDE RATE: 46.3/10,000



**LIFE EXPECTANCY: 83.1 Years**

**LIFE EXPECTANCY: 64.8 Years**

Source: Baltimore City Neighborhood Health Profile Reports 2011 (<http://health.baltimorecity.gov/neighborhoods/neighborhood-health-profile-reports>). Accessed 10/25/2016

# Root Causes of Health Disparities



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Adapted from King G and Williams DR. 1995. Race and Health. In: Society and Health. Amick, Levine, Tarlov, Walsh (eds);  
Oxford Univ Press and Warnecke RB et al. Am J Public Health 2008 Sep;98(9):1608-15.



## What is COVID-19?



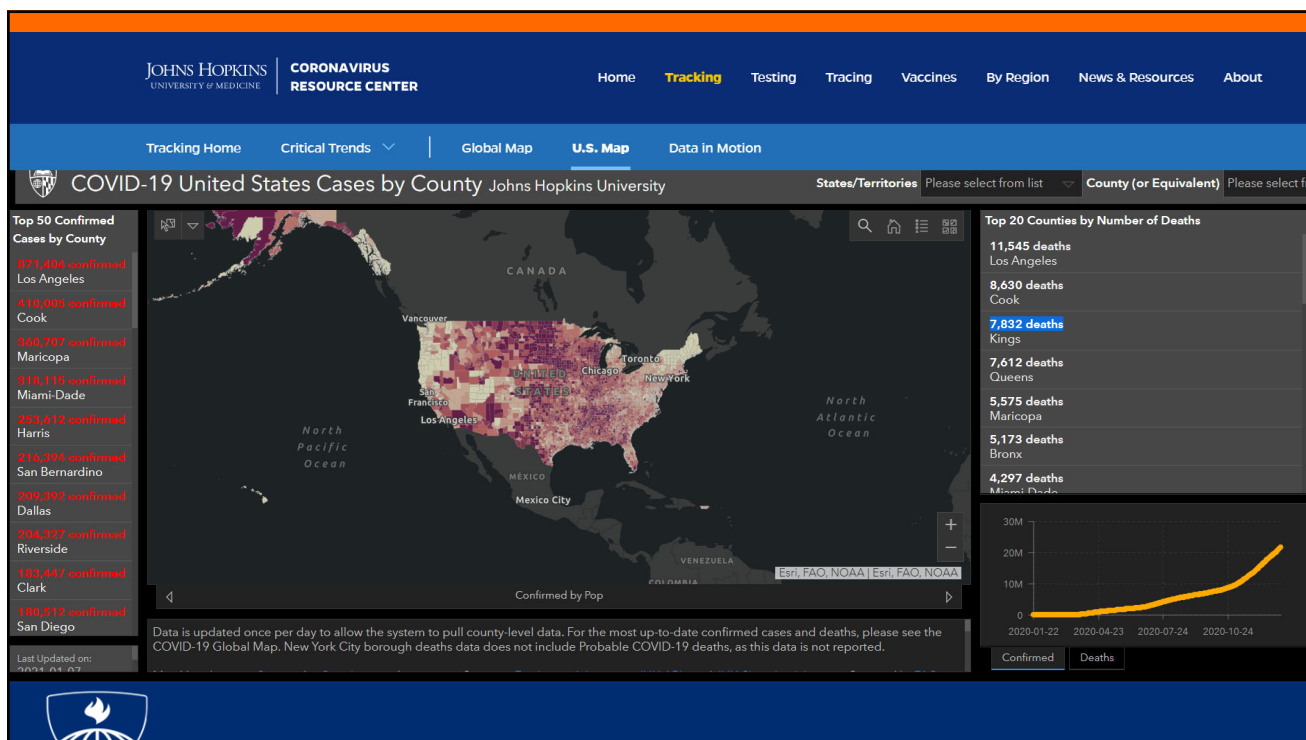
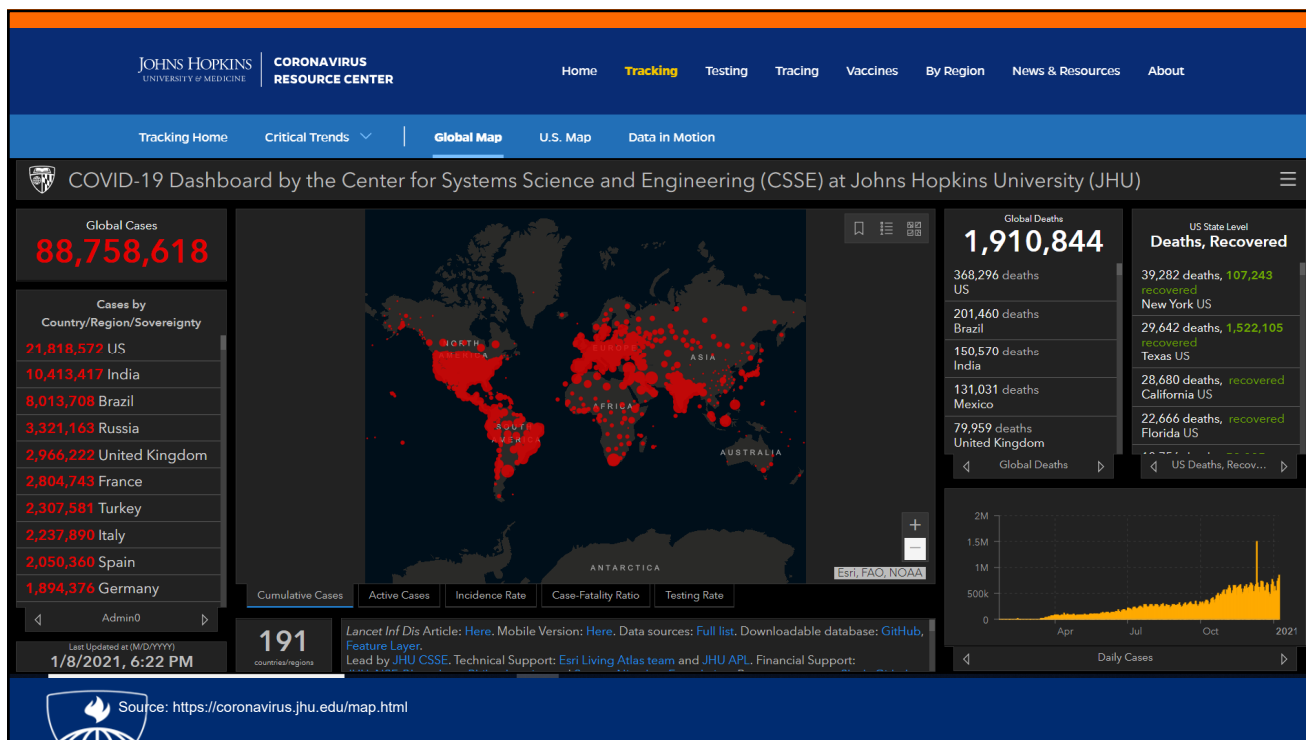
- COVID-19 is an illness caused by infection by a coronavirus, which is a type of virus that causes human and animal illnesses.
- The virus that causes COVID-19 is highly transmittable, and the illness it causes ranges from very mild to life threatening.
- Severe cases usually require hospitalization and supportive care.
- People who are male, older, or have underlying health conditions appear to have a higher risk of severe illness

## What are the Most Common Symptoms of COVID-19?



- Fever
- Cough
- Shortness of breath or difficulty breathing
- Chills
- Repeated shaking with chills
- Muscle pain
- Headache
- Sore throat
- New loss of taste or smell

Source: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/symptoms-testing/symptoms.html>




## COVID-19 Cases, Hospitalizations, and Deaths, by Race/Ethnicity


Rate ratios compared to White, Non-Hispanic persons	American Indian or Alaska Native, Non-Hispanic persons	Asian, Non-Hispanic persons	Black or African American, Non-Hispanic persons	Hispanic or Latino persons
Cases <sup>1</sup>	1.8x	0.6x	1.4x	1.7x
Hospitalization <sup>2</sup>	4.0x	1.2x	3.7x	4.1x
Death <sup>3</sup>	2.6x	1.1x	2.8x	2.8x

Race and ethnicity are risk markers for other underlying conditions that affect health, including socioeconomic status, access to health care, and exposure to the virus related to occupation, e.g., among frontline, essential, and critical infrastructure workers.


### How to Slow the Spread of COVID-19




Wear a mask



Stay 6 feet apart



Wash your hands




References on back


[cdc.gov/coronavirus](https://cdc.gov/coronavirus)

CS3 19360-A 11/30/2020


## Challenges Magnified for Vulnerable Populations During COVID-19 Outbreak




Lack of access to basic resources such as food, water, shelter, and transportation




Suboptimal housing conditions




Employment in essential jobs with limited protections



Lack of access to healthcare services

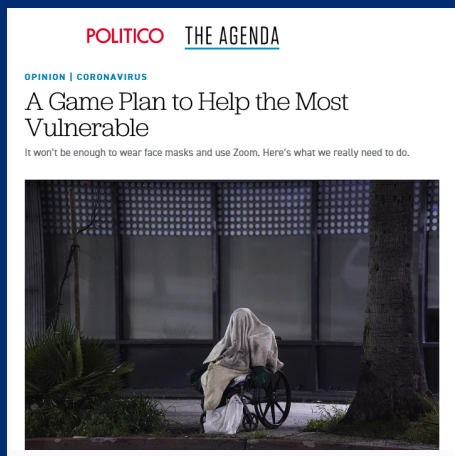


Mistrust of institutions due to discriminatory experiences



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# A Game Plan to Help the Most Vulnerable



- 1** Track data on COVID-19 cases by race, ethnicity, and geography
- 2** Communicate and build trust with communities of color
- 3** Enhance access to testing and health care
- 4** Protect essential and low wage workers
- 5** Provide social services to keep vulnerable groups safe

Source:  
<https://www.politico.com/news/agenda/2020/04/07/game-plan-to-help-those-most-vulnerable-to-covid-19-171863>



<https://www.politico.com/news/agenda/2020/04/07/game-plan-to-help-those-most-vulnerable-to-covid-19-171863>

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## How Should Leaders Communicate in a Public Health Crisis?



1. Be first → provide regular updates
2. Be right → do not overly reassure, focus on the facts
3. Be credible → link with local experts to provide additional voices to your messages
4. Express empathy → you want to hear and understand concerns
5. Promote action → tell people what they can do
6. Show respect
7. Correct falsehoods

Adapted from: <https://emergency.cdc.gov/cerc/>

## Available Treatments for COVID-19

- No single confirmed therapeutic option for patients with COVID-19 has been fully elucidated
- Strong recommendations against use of hydroxychloroquine and lopinavir-ritonavir
- Conditional recommendation against the use of remdesivir in hospitalized patients
- Potentially effective treatments include:
  - Dexamethasone (severe and critical COVID-19, strong recommendation)
  - Monoclonal antibody treatments, including bamlanivimab and a combination of casirivimab and imdevimab (nonhospitalized at risk patients)
  - Convalescent serum (severe COVID-19, potential benefit)

Siemieniuk R et al. BMJ. 2020 Sep 4;370:m3379. doi: 10.1136/bmj.m3379. Update in: BMJ. 2020 Nov 19;371:m4475.  
Casadevall A, Joyner MJ, Pirofski LA. JAMA. 2020 Aug 4;324(5):455-457

## The Basics of Vaccination



- Vaccines help protect against infectious diseases
- They also save families time and money, and help protect individuals, communities, and even future generations
- Getting vaccinated will help stop infection, illness, and loss of life, **but masks aren't going away soon.**
- Tens of thousands of people from diverse backgrounds have participated in vaccine trials to ensure their safety
- The decision to get vaccinated is up to each individual, however, it is important that it is a well-informed decision



## Who Should we Be Vaccinating First?



<https://www.cnn.com/2020/12/15/us/black-americans-and-vaccine-hesitancy/index.html>

- **Front Line Workers**
  - This includes health care workers, nursing homes, essential workers, and first responders
- **Should We Be Prioritizing Minority Groups?**
  - It is important to prioritize those who are most vulnerable
  - Due to social determinants of health and the impact of racism, minority groups have been hit hardest by COVID-19
  - Many persons from minority communities are also front line and essential health workers

## The Particular Challenges of Vaccine Distribution to Minority Groups

- **Logistical Challenges**
  - Minority communities are often physically distanced from health care institutions where vaccine distribution may occur
  - Transporting, storing and administering the vaccine is complicated, and some minority communities lack the resources to support a vaccination campaign
- **Mistrust Challenges**
  - Black, Latino, and Native Americans have a history of distrust in medicine due to historical oppression, structural racism, and ongoing inequities



# Mistrust in Communities of Color Stems from Past and Present Events



Tuskegee Syphilis Study



Mrs. Henrietta Lacks



# Mistrust by Race & Ethnicity

## Health Care

Say the health care system often treats people unfairly based on their race or ethnic background

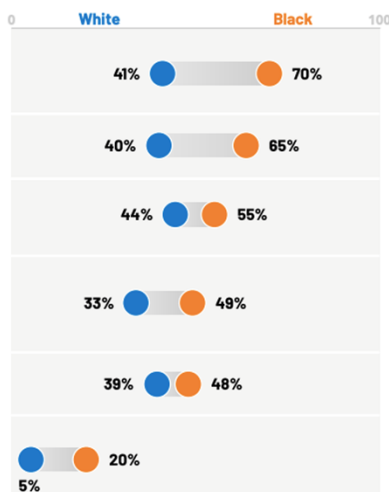
Say it is difficult to find a doctor who shares their background and experience

Trust the health care system only some or almost none of the time to do what is right for their community

Would definitely or probably not get a coronavirus vaccine if it was determined to be safe by scientists and available for free to anyone who wants it

Say it is difficult to find health care they can afford

Have personally been treated unfairly based on their race while getting health care for themselves or a family member in the past 12 months



## Report on Black Adults in the US



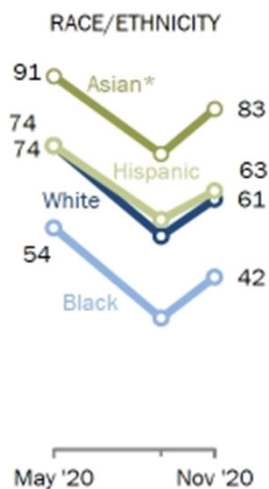
Say the health care system often treats people unfairly based on their race or ethnic background

- Black people report less trust in medicine and healthcare compared to their white counterparts
- That mistrust has increased in recent years

Poll by Kaiser Family Foundation (KFF) and The Undeclared: <http://files.kff.org/attachment/Infographic-The-Racial-Divide-in-Health-Care-Experiences-and-COVID-19-Impacts.pdf>

## Mistrust by Race/Ethnicity

*% of US adults who say they would definitely/probably get a vaccine for COVID-19 if one were available today*



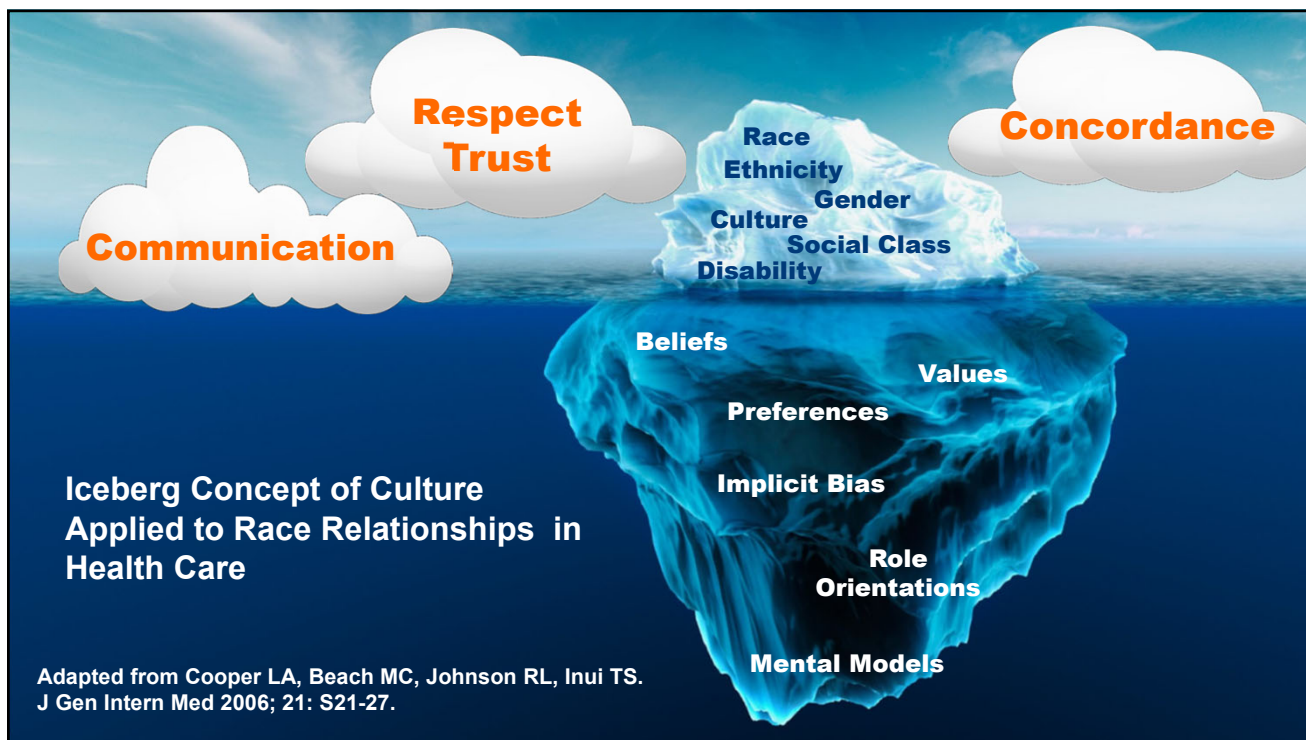
- Compared to all other racial/ethnic groups, Black people report the least trust in the vaccine

<https://www.pewresearch.org/science/2020/12/03/intent-to-get-a-covid-19-vaccine-rises-to-60-as-confidence-in-research-and-development-process-increases/>

## How to Build Trust in Vaccination

- **Use Targeted Communication**
  - Health professionals must work closely with trusted community organizations, and leaders to overcome mistrust and increase understanding and engagement related to the COVID-19 vaccine.
  - Communication should be clear, nonjudgmental, transparent and address misperceptions
- **Build Trust by Example**
  - Seeing health professionals, and others who receive the vaccine early, have positive outcomes may help increase vaccine acceptance
- **Highlight the Diversity of Scientists involved in the Vaccine's Development and the Diversity of Study Participants**





The banner features a dark blue background with a grid of white squares on the left side. The text 'NIH Community Engagement Alliance (CEAL) Against COVID-19 Disparities' is written in white, bold, sans-serif font. Below the text is the NIH logo, which consists of the letters 'NIH' in a white box followed by the text 'National Institutes of Health' and 'Community Engagement Alliance' in a smaller font. On the right side of the banner, there is a 3x2 grid of six portrait photographs of diverse individuals: an older Black man smiling, an older Asian woman smiling, an older White man with a beard smiling, a Black woman with glasses smiling, a middle-aged Asian woman looking down, and a young man wearing a white hard hat and smiling.

# CEAL

## Mission and Vision Statement

### Mission statement

To provide **trustworthy information** through active community engagement and outreach to the people hardest-hit by the COVID-19 pandemic, including African Americans, Hispanics/Latinos and American Indians/Alaska Natives, with the goal of building long-lasting partnerships as well as **improving diversity and inclusion in our research response** to COVID-19.

### Vision statement

To become a **trusted partner** in community engagement efforts to improve inclusive participation in the scientific response to the COVID-19 pandemic and related disparities.

## CEAL Operating Objectives of State Research Teams

### CEAL Objective 1

Conduct urgent community-engaged **research and outreach** focused on COVID-19 awareness and education to address **misinformation and distrust**.

### CEAL Objective 2

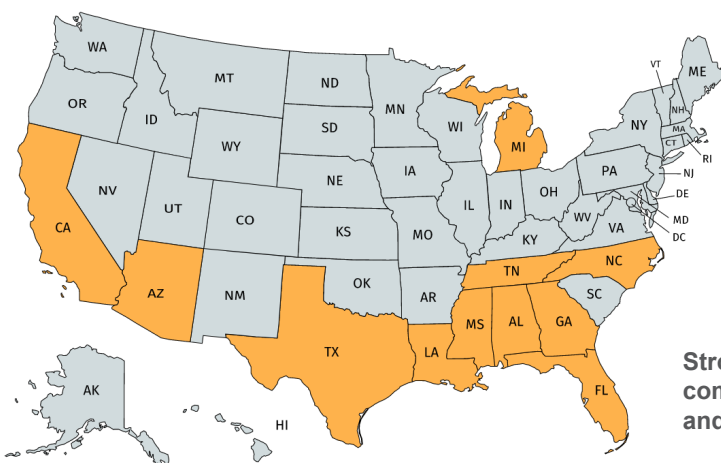
Promote and facilitate **inclusion of diverse racial and ethnic populations** in clinical trials (prevention, vaccine, therapeutics), reflective of the populations disproportionately affected by the pandemic.

## NIH Community Engagement Alliance (CEAL) Against COVID-19 Disparities

### CEAL Activities:

- Support and expand existing NIH community outreach efforts already underway through COVID-19 trial networks, such as ACTIV (**treatments**), RADx (**diagnostic tests**), CoVPN (**vaccines**), and **CONNECTS**.
- Establish communication networks across available channels and through engagement with trusted organizations and people.

## NIH Community Engagement Alliance (CEAL) Against COVID-19 Disparities



NIH CEAL: <https://covid19community.nih.gov>

### CEAL State Teams

- Alabama
- Arizona
- California
- Florida
- Georgia
- Louisiana
- Michigan
- Mississippi
- North Carolina
- Tennessee
- Texas

Strong partnerships between community engagement researchers and community-based organizations.



## CEAL Teams: Cross-Cutting Themes

- All focus on **assessing** and **addressing** community knowledge, **misinformation and mistrust** about COVID-19, including vaccine and clinical trial misinformation and distrust.
- **Strong partnerships** across academic, faith- and community-based organizations as well as federally qualified health centers (FQHCs) and historically Black colleges and universities (HBCUs).
- Integrated projects focused on the most affected communities.
- Innovative strategies to facilitate **inclusion in COVID-19 trials**.



## CEAL Steering Committee and Work Groups



- Steering Committee
- Inclusive Participation in Clinical Trials Work Group
- Community-based Needs Assessment & Evaluation (A&E) Work Group
- Communications Work Group

# CEAL National Engagement and Communications Progress Highlights and Resource Needs

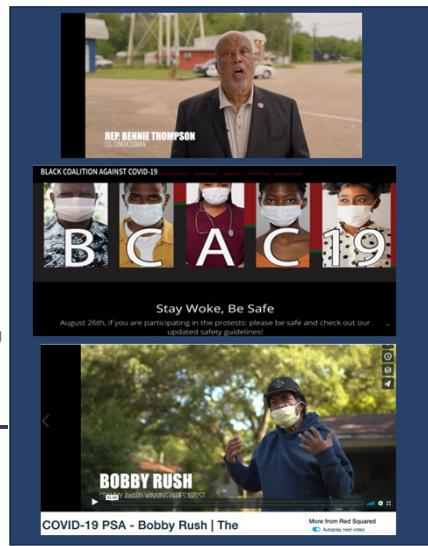
## STRATEGY AT A GLANCE

<b>Messages &amp; Tailored Content</b>	Collect, create, and curate appropriate materials and resources
<b>Web &amp; Digital Access</b>	Enable communities' access to tools for use.
<b>Education (Lay &amp; Prof.)</b>	Enable learning opportunities (COVID, clinical trials, vaccines).
<b>Media &amp; Multi-Channel Diss</b>	Leverage all media platforms to provide accurate information and messages.
<b>Strategic Partners</b>	Foster critical partnerships and engagement opportunities.

## PROGRESS HIGHLIGHTS

- Curated and created 40+ resources across 7 topics.
- Multiple resources available in both English and Spanish.
- Established dynamic NIH web repository with bi-weekly refreshes.
- Shareable social media materials and short videos (38 sec).
- Biweekly eNewsletter.
- NLM - series of lay educational videos/areas of greatest need.
- NCI - toolkits and webinars for evidence on COVID information delivery.
- Leveraging partnerships with digital influencers representing Blacks, Hispanics, and AI.
- Coordinate local level media efforts with each CEAL team.
- Engaging minority media outlets/channels.
- Forums with 90 organizations within 5 categories.
- Toolkit for Congressional caucuses.
- Leveraging voices of influence – nationally-known pastors, national leaders, etc.

## Selected Examples



# Johns Hopkins Center for Health Equity

## MISSION

Promote equity in health for socially at-risk populations through:

1. Advancing scientific knowledge
2. Educating and training leaders
3. Partnering with communities
  - Raising public awareness of health inequities
  - Promoting sustainable changes in practice and policy



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If you want to go **fast**,  
go **alone**...



STELLENBOSCH UNIVERSITY BOTANICAL GARDENS,  
STELLENBOSCH, SOUTH AFRICA

...if you want to go **far**, go  
**together**. - African proverb



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