



NHCSL

THE NATIONAL HISPANIC CAUCUS OF STATE LEGISLATORS

RESOLUTION

No. 2022-09

Improving Access to COVID-19 Treatment and Testing for Vulnerable Populations

Reported to the Caucus by the NHCSL Healthcare Task Force
Rep. Alma Hernández, (AZ), Chair

**Sponsored by
Rep. Alma Hernández, (AZ), Chair**

Unanimously ratified by the Caucus on December 1, 2022

WHEREAS, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), adults and children with underlying conditions such as diabetes, asthma, obesity, chronic lung disease, or sickle cell disease are considered high risk patients for COVID-19;¹ and,

WHEREAS, according to the CDC, patients of color are up to 2.8 times more likely to be hospitalized from COVID-19 than white non-Hispanic patients, up to 2.1 times more likely to die, and up to 1.5 times more likely to become infected;² and,

WHEREAS, a Kaiser Family Foundation analysis found that counties with the highest poverty rates and those that are majority Black, Hispanic, and American Indian and

¹ [People with Certain Medical Conditions | CDC](#)

² [Risk for COVID-19 Infection, Hospitalization, and Death By Race/Ethnicity | CDC](#)

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Alaska Native are less likely to have a facility with COVID-19 treatments available and have fewer facilities available compared to their counterpart counties;³ and,

WHEREAS, access to antivirals are crucial for treating patients within 5 days after a COVID-19 diagnosis, with Paxlovid being roughly 89% effective at preventing serious illness and death; and

WHEREAS, Federal Test-to-Treat Programs are defined as local health care centers and clinics that provide COVID-19 tests, prescriptions, and antiviral medications all in one visit;⁴ and,

WHEREAS, in a recent study conducted by the Milken Institute School of Public Health, over 50 million people in America do not have access to federal test-to-treat programs within a 20-mile radius of their homes;⁵ and,

WHEREAS, a recent CDC report recommends increasing access to authorized prescribers in high vulnerability areas; continuing education and outreach for patients; reinforcing the importance of seeking medication early; and continued expansion of oral antiviral dispensing sites nationwide.⁶

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that the National Hispanic Caucus of State Legislators calls on the US government to work with national, state, and local organizations to improve access to antivirals to reduce the incidence of serious illness and death from COVID-19; and,

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the National Hispanic Caucus of State Legislators calls on state legislatures and health officials to ensure that health plans cover COVID-19 testing and therapeutics, without cost sharing and/or prior authorization, including treatments approved or granted emergency use authorization by the federal Food and Drug Administration when prescribed or furnished by a licensed health care provider acting within their scope of practice and the standard of care; and,

BE IT FINALLY RESOLVED, that the National Hispanic Caucus of State Legislators calls on state legislatures and health officials to ensure that systems are in place to prescribe and supply the COVID-19 therapeutics to eligible patients, including increased access to authorized prescribers without requiring patients to be hospitalized.

THE HEALTHCARE TASK FORCE UNANIMOUSLY RECOMMENDED THIS RESOLUTION TO THE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE FOR APPROVAL. THE EXECUTIVE

³ <https://www.kff.org/coronavirus-covid-19/issue-brief/how-equitable-is-access-to-covid-19-treatments/>

⁴ [Geospatial disparities in federal COVID-19 test-to-treat program | medRxiv](#)

⁵ [Geospatial disparities in federal COVID-19 test-to-treat program | medRxiv](#)

⁶ https://www.cdc.gov/mmwr/volumes/71/wr/mm7125e1.htm?s_cid=mm7125e1_w#contribAff

COMMITTEE UNANIMOUSLY APPROVED THIS RESOLUTION AT ITS MEETING OF NOVEMBER 18, 2022.

THE NATIONAL HISPANIC CAUCUS OF STATE LEGISLATORS UNANIMOUSLY RATIFIED THIS RESOLUTION ON DECEMBER 1, 2022 AT ITS ANNUAL MEETING IN LAS VEGAS, NEVADA.

