FACT SHEET:
President Biden Takes Aggressive and Immediate Action to Contain COVID-19 Crisis

The President to Release National COVID-19 Strategy and Sign Executive Actions to Expand Testing, Administer Vaccines, Advance Racial Equity, and Safely Reopen Schools and Businesses

Today, President Joe Biden will release the National Strategy for the COVID-19 Response and Pandemic Preparedness -- a comprehensive roadmap to guide America out of this pandemic. To jumpstart this strategy, he will immediately sign 10 Executive Orders and other directives and take additional actions to move quickly to contain the COVID-19 crisis by expanding testing, administering vaccines, advancing racial equity, and safely reopening schools and businesses. These steps build on actions President Biden took yesterday to rejoin the World Health Organization, encourage masking, and to create his White House COVID-19 Response Team.

Below are more details on the steps that President Biden will take today to immediately put his National Strategy into action.

IMMEDIATELY EXPAND EMERGENCY RELIEF AND EXERCISE THE DEFENSE PRODUCTION ACT (DPA)

Manufacture and Deliver Supplies for Vaccination, Testing, and Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)

President Biden is taking immediate action to fill supply shortfalls for vaccination supplies, testing supplies, and PPE, and to ensure that these critical supplies equitably reach American communities, especially communities of color and other underserved communities hit hardest by the virus. The President will issue an Executive Order directing relevant agencies to exercise all appropriate authorities, including the DPA, to accelerate manufacturing, delivery, and administration to meet shortfalls in equipment and supplies needed for the COVID-19 response, beginning with action to increase the availability of critical supplies such as N95 masks, isolation gowns, nitrile gloves, PCR sample collection swabs, test reagents, pipette tips, laboratory analysis machines for PCR tests, high-absorbency foam swabs, nitrocellulose material for rapid antigen tests, rapid test kits, and all the necessary equipment and material to accelerate the manufacture, delivery, and administration of COVID-19 vaccine.

Reimburse States So They Can Deploy the Emergency Personnel and Supplies Americans Need

The President will issue a Presidential Memorandum directing the Federal Emergency Management Administration (FEMA) to increase federal reimbursement to states and Tribes from 75 percent to 100 percent of the cost for National Guard personnel and emergency supplies, such as PPE, cleaning and sanitizing efforts, and the personnel and equipment needed to create vaccination centers. The order also includes restoring full reimbursement for eligible costs necessary to support safe school reopening through the FEMA Disaster Relief Fund. To help address the health and financial crises faced by Tribal Nations throughout our country and to advance Tribal sovereignty in our COVID-19 response, this Memorandum also expands FEMA resources for Tribal governments.

MITIGATE SPREAD THROUGH EXPANDING TESTING, TREATMENT, AND THE PUBLIC HEALTH WORKFORCE, AND ESTABLISHING CLEAR PUBLIC HEALTH STANDARDS

Establish the Pandemic Testing Board, Expand Testing, and Strengthen the Public Health Workforce

To control the COVID-19 pandemic and safely reopen schools and businesses, the U.S. must have wide-spread testing. President Biden will issue an Executive Order that establishes the COVID-19 Pandemic Testing Board to bring the full force of the federal government's expertise to expanding testing supply and increasing access to testing. The federal government will increase testing capacity by directing the use of the DPA and other authorities to procure more tests and expand manufacturing capacity where possible. The Executive Order will promote surge capacity for testing in the United States, onshore test manufacturing, expand the public health workforce, support COVID-19 screening for schools, and ensure that underserved communities, including communities of color, can equitably access tests.

Bolster Access to COVID-19 Treatments and Clinical Care

Effective treatments for COVID-19 are critical to saving lives. President Biden will sign an Executive Order directing studies, including large-scale randomized trials, to identify treatments for COVID-19 and to ensure that such studies address the needs of diverse populations. The Executive Order establishes a comprehensive, integrated, equitable, and coordinated preclinical drug discovery and development program to allow therapeutics to be evaluated and developed in response to pandemic threats. The Order also outlines steps to improve clinical care, provide assistance to long-term care facilities and intermediate care facilities for people with disabilities, increase health care workforce capacity, expand access to programs designed to meet long-term health needs of patients recovering from COVID-19, and support access to safe and effective COVID-19 therapies for those without coverage.

Improve Data to Combat COVID-19

Metrics and metric-driven public health guidance will be essential to controlling the pandemic. President Biden's Executive Order will enhance the United States' collection, production, sharing, and analysis of data to support an equitable COVID-19 response and recovery. The federal government will work with state, local, Tribal and territorial governments to aggregate and analyze data to track access to vaccines and testing, reopen schools and businesses, and address disparities in COVID-19 infections and health outcomes. And, the federal government will create publicly available dashboards with national and state-by-state level information, consistent with privacy protections, on cases, testing, vaccinations, and hospital admissions to make real-time information available to policymakers and the public.

MOUNT A SAFE, EFFECTIVE, COMPREHENSIVE VACCINATION CAMPAIGN

Take Immediate Actions to Convert Vaccines into Vaccinations

The Biden-Harris Administration will spare no effort to ensure the public can get vaccinated safely, effectively and equitably. To meet the aggressive vaccination target of 100 million shots by the end of his first 100 days in office, President Biden will take immediate action to improve the vaccination program. Yesterday, he directed FEMA to begin standing up the first federally-supported community vaccination centers, with the goal of standing up 100 centers in the next month. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) will also launch the federal pharmacy program -- making vaccines available to communities in their local pharmacies beginning next month. And, he tasked the U.S. Public Health Services Commissioned Corps with expanding its workforce and preparing for deployment. Central to this effort will be expanded support and collaboration with state, local, Tribal and territorial governments, including the establishment of COVID Response Liaisons for each state -- a model based on the response to Hurricane Sandy.

SAFELY REOPEN SCHOOLS, BUSINESSES, AND TRAVEL WHILE PROTECTING OUR WORKERS

Direct Action to Support Students & Safely Reopen Schools

President Biden will issue an Executive Order directing the Departments of Education and Health and Human Services (HHS) to provide guidance on safe reopening and operating for schools, child care providers, and institutions of higher education. Ensuring the safety of students and educators and adherence to science will be

paramount. And, the Order directs the Departments of Education and Health and Human Services to collect data around reopening and school closures so state and local officials have metrics to inform decision-making and can better understand the impact of closures on students from families with low-incomes, students of color, English-language learners, students with disabilities and others.

The COVID-19 Response Team will work to ensure that testing materials, support for contact tracing, and vaccinations for teachers are equitably provided to support in-person care and learning. Finally, the order encourages the Federal Communications Commission to increase connectivity options for students lacking reliable home broadband, so that they can continue to learn if their schools are operating remotely.

This work will be supported by the Presidential Memorandum directing FEMA to offer reimbursement for eligible emergency supplies, such as PPE for schools and child care providers.

The Administration will engage with educators and their unions, students and their families, state and local education and public health officials, civil rights advocates, and other experts in the field. And, the Department of Education will work with HHS to ensure that guidance for schools is updated based on the latest science and any developments in the pandemic, including the spread of new coronavirus variants that may have a higher transmission rate. The Administration will always be honest about the challenges we face, directly addressing how and whether changes in the pandemic may impact the reopening of schools or the ability of schools to remain open.

Help Protect Workers from COVID-19

Millions of Americans, many of whom are people of color, immigrants, and low-wage workers, continue to put their lives on the line to keep the country functioning through the pandemic. President Biden will sign an Executive Order calling on the Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) to immediately release clear guidance for employers to help keep workers safe from COVID-19 exposure. It also asks OSHA and Mine Safety and Health Administration to determine whether to establish emergency temporary standards that require employers to take steps to keep workers safe from COVID-19 and it directs OSHA to enforce worker health and safety requirements, targeting the worst violators. With the goal of protecting all workers from COVID-19, the order instructs agencies to explore ways to protect workers who are not always covered by OSHA standards, such as those who are self-employed.

Promote Safe Travel

To protect travelers from COVID-19, President Biden will issue an Executive Order to require mask-wearing in airports, on certain modes of public transportation, including many trains, airplanes, maritime vessels, and intercity buses. For air travel, this Executive Order also requires international travelers to produce proof of a negative COVID-19 test prior to departing for the United States and to comply with CDC guidelines for self-isolation and self-quarantine upon arrival. The Executive Order also calls for the consideration of additional public health measures in domestic travel and for consultation with foreign governments and other stakeholders to implement public health measures for safe travel, including at land and sea borders.

PROTECT THOSE MOST AT RISK AND ADDRESS INEQUITIES FACED BY COMMUNITIES OF COLOR AND OTHER UNDERSERVED GROUPS

Advance Health Equity in the Nation's COVID-19 Response

In order to address the disproportionate and severe impact of COVID-19 on communities of color and other underserved populations, President Biden will issue an Executive Order to ensure an equitable pandemic response and recovery. The order establishes a COVID-19 Health Equity Task Force to provide specific recommendations to the President for allocating resources and funding in communities with inequities in COVID-19 outcomes by race, ethnicity, geography, disability, and other considerations. The federal government will expand equity data collection; increase access to PPE, testing, therapies, and vaccines in underserved communities and high-risk settings; and assess and update pandemic response plans to ensure equity. The health workforce, including community-based workers, will be expanded to assist with contact tracing, vaccination, and linkage to care. Additionally, the Biden Administration will work with states, local jurisdictions, Tribal communities, and territories to address unmet basic needs, including food, housing, and childcare, for individuals and families affected by COVID-19.

RESTORE U.S. GLOBAL LEADERSHIP AND BUILD BETTER PREPAREDNESS

Advance U.S. Global Leadership, Support the Health and Humanitarian Response to COVID-19, and Protect Against Future Biological Threats

America's withdrawal from the world stage and retreat from the World Health Organization has impeded progress on the global COVID-19 response and left the United States and the world more vulnerable to future pandemics. Yesterday, President Biden signed letters to the United Nations Secretary General and World Health Organization Director General to cease America's withdrawal from the organization and to outline U.S. intent to work constructively with the WHO to strengthen and reform it.

Today, President Biden will sign a Presidential Directive to restore America's leadership, support the international pandemic response effort, promote resilience for future threats, and advance global health security and the Global Health Security Agenda. This directive restores U.S. leadership and seeks to support the international health and humanitarian response to the COVID-19 pandemic and its secondary impacts, global health security and diplomacy, and better biopreparedness and resilience for emerging and future biological threats.

RACIAL EQUITY IMPACT

The COVID-19 crisis has shined a light on and exacerbated the persistent racial inequities in our healthcare system and our economy. Americans of color are being infected and dying from COVID-19 at higher rates, while workers of color disproportionately put themselves at risk of exposure to COVID-19 on the frontline of this crisis to keep our country running. Changing the course of the COVID-19 crisis requires mobilizing an equitable response across the whole of our government. The new COVID-19 Health Equity Task Force will intensely focus on these issues. The actions to expand the availability of testing and vaccines in communities of color, and other underserved communities, ensure that new clinical treatments are developed to serve diverse Americans, and safely reopen our schools so that children who are facing disproportionately high risks of learning loss can get back into the classroom. These actions will also support Native communities and Tribal governments to address the health and economic crises in Indian country.

WORKER IMPACT

These executive actions will help keep millions of workers healthy and safe from COVID-19. They direct agencies to provide new guidance so that employers and schools know what they need to do to keep workers safe. They'll increase access to personal protective equipment, testing, and vaccines that will help reduce the spread of COVID-19 in workplaces across the country. They'll help ensure more people are wearing masks when they travel, immediately providing more protection to many airline workers, bus drivers, and other transportation workers, and providing Americans safe ways to travel to work.

With the support of funding from the President's American Rescue Package, the President's plan to safely reopen schools will help students engage in in-person learning, parents return to work and prevent more educators from being laid off, as we combat the virus and make schools safe for students and educators again.

These measures will help keep workers safe and healthy, get more Americans back to work, and ultimately reduce the spread of the virus.

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