



United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

December 8, 2021

Dear Senator/Representative:

We are members of the Catholic Cares Coalition, a national coalition of 60 Catholic religious and non-profit organizations promoting COVID-19 vaccination in our communities and working to address vaccine equity in the U.S. and around the world. As we begin to prepare for the coming Christmas season, we write to urge you to come together to support robust funding for purchasing, production, delivery and outreach efforts for COVID-19 vaccines and therapeutics around the world.

December 11th marks the one-year anniversary of the U.S. Food and Drug Administration's emergency use authorization for the first COVID-19 vaccine. It is a time to give thanks for the incredible work of the scientists, the support of public authorities, and the prayers of millions which made this possible. Since that time, Catholic hospitals, charities, parishes, schools, and other Catholic organizations have been at the front line of national and international efforts to provide COVID-19 vaccines. It is in this work and our shared belief that all people are born with innate dignity and worth, that we promote the common good by doing our part to help end the COVID-19 pandemic.

To date, through our national efforts the United States has administered nearly 500 million doses of COVID-19 vaccines in the United States and has donated more than 200 million more doses to more than 100 countries around the world. We thank you for your leadership in providing the support needed to make this domestic and international response a reality. However, the Omicron variant has demonstrated that the virus will not be defeated until the rest of the world is vaccinated. We must fulfill the goal of vaccinating 70 percent of the total global population by next year. To do so, the U.S. must go beyond the stated goal of sharing 200 million doses this year and must provide additional funding and support to produce, distribute, and administer COVID-19 vaccines globally. In addition, as new COVID-19 treatments are approved we must scale up our investments so that these life-saving treatments are available to those around the world in need.

As of December 2nd, only 41% of the world population is fully vaccinated with many people in the poorest countries still waiting to receive even their first dose. Of the 92 COVAX reliant countries, the median vaccination rate is just 11%. This presents a profound moral and urgent challenge as we seek to save lives and stop a pandemic which recognizes no race, class, or national border. We therefore urge you to provide additional funding and support for the manufacturing and delivery of COVID-19 vaccines and therapeutics so that all people have a chance to receive the life-saving support that those in the developed world rely upon. The



continued surges within the U.S. and Europe are a reminder that we cannot stop this pandemic anywhere unless we stop it everywhere!

We also urge you to provide additional funding to strengthen global distribution and local health care capacities to ensure equitable distribution and delivery of COVID-19 vaccines and therapeutics. Investing in the ACT-Accelerator, regional vaccine manufacturing and strengthening the long-term capacity of local health care systems are all critical for responding to the current COVID-19 challenges as well as prepare for future health emergencies. Without the increased capacity to manufacture vaccines and therapeutics globally and the ability to plan for and administer vaccination campaigns, meeting the goal of 70% of the world vaccinated will remain elusive.

Finally, we urge you to include support for vaccine outreach efforts which include faith-based organizations and community leaders. In the United States, we have seen the incredible impact that faith and community leaders can have in building trust and addressing vaccine hesitancy in their communities. However, we have also seen the struggles which occur when plans do not fully include local input and participation for delivering vaccines to people or fail to provide the information and knowledge needed to address questions and concerns. Investing in community and public engagement efforts is critical for ensuring that the COVID-19 vaccines and therapeutics produced and distributed are utilized by those most in need.

As we prepare for the Christmas season, we give thanks for the many blessings of the past year and the incredible progress that has been made. We urge you to build on this progress by coming together in unity to pass an annual appropriations bill which supports a robust global response to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Sincerely,

Association of Catholic Colleges and Universities
Academy of Catholic Hispanic Theologians of the United States
Association of Marianist Universities
Catholic Climate Covenant
Catholic Diocese of Lexington
Catholic Health Association of India
Catholic Health Association of the United States
Catholic Medical Mission Board
Christian Brothers Conference
Diocese of Davenport
Diocese of Sioux City
Franciscan Action Network
Franciscan Mission Service



Friends in Solidarity (with South Sudan)
In Word and Witness
Jesuit Conference Office of Justice and Ecology
Jesuit Refugee Service/USA
Magis Americas
Medical Mission Sisters
Missionhurst-CICM
National Catholic Education Association
Network
Sisters of the Precious Blood
SOAR
United States Catholic Mission Association