

HEALTH
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June 5, 2020
Governor Ned Lamont
Office of the Governor
State of Connecticut
210 Capitol Avenue
Hartford, CT 06106
Via email

Dear Governor Lamont,

Thank you for the tireless work of your administration to protect Connecticut's residents from COVID-19 infection. We write today to ask that state-led pandemic-related efforts intentionally prioritize Connecticut's communities of color.

Many [statements](#) from the administration and its emergency-related advisory groups talk about "members of high risk communities" or "vulnerable and underserved" areas and residents. The only specific populations mentioned in most official communication, for example the [recent announcement](#) of FEMA funding for crisis counseling, are people who are older adults or experiencing homelessness. How these terms are defined is crucial to ensuring that testing, contact tracing, and pandemic relief efforts reach the populations bearing a disproportionate burden of this emergency.

People of color in Connecticut are at higher risk of COVID-19 infection and death due to a higher likelihood of working in "essential worker" roles, living in more densely populated homes and neighborhoods, and having underlying conditions. These factors are all the result of historical and ongoing injustice in our systems, policies, and culture.

In Connecticut, the disparities in rates of COVID-19 infection and death by race have grown steadily. Not only have rates of infection and death grown, but the preventable gap between these rates by race has gotten even wider over time. A host of research clearly demonstrates that the health risks of being a Black person in the U.S. cannot be explained by socio-economic factors alone. Racism itself takes a physical toll. Therefore, it is crucial that Connecticut specifically prioritize populations of color for COVID-19 testing, contact tracing, and outreach to support access to services.

Again, we are grateful for all you and your administration have done to mitigate the impact of this pandemic. Thank you for your time and attention.

Sincerely,



Tekisha Everette, PhD
Executive Director

cc:

Paul Mounds
Josh Geballe
Vicki Veltri
Deidre Gifford