

# Congress of the United States

Washington, DC 20515

April 13, 2018

Dear Tri-Caucus Colleague,

Now more than ever, is the time for our leaders to stand up and put our duty of ensuring equity for all at the forefront of our legislative agenda. In order to accomplish this, we must give more importance to collective efforts. This is why we are urging you to join as an original cosponsor of the Health Equity and Accountability Act of 2018.

Since the 108th Congress, the Congressional Tri-Caucus – comprised of the Congressional Asian Pacific American Caucus (CAPAC), the Congressional Black Caucus (CBC), and the Congressional Hispanic Caucus (CHC) – has led the introduction of the Health Equity and Accountability Act (HEAA). HEAA is a comprehensive, broadly supported legislation that aims to reduce ethnic and racial disparities in access to health care and outcomes. Since its initial introduction over a decade ago, HEAA has provided a principled, comprehensive, and strategic plan to eliminate health disparities and improve health outcomes for susceptible communities.

The Affordable Care Act (ACA) dramatically expanded access to healthcare for communities of color – and it included many vital provisions to address persistent health disparities and inequities faced by these communities. While working to protect the progress we have made, we must strive together to close the significant gaps that remain. We know that communities of color continue to face significant barriers to culturally and linguistically appropriate care – and that the color of your skin and your zip code can still determine your health outcomes. Around the United States and U.S. territories, marginalized and underserved communities face discrimination, inequity, and lack of access to quality, culturally-competent care.

In the 115<sup>th</sup> Congress, the Health Equity and Accountability Act of 2018 will build on past successes, such as the ACA, and on previous iterations of the legislation. We are excited that this bill provides many updates, including: expanding the list of high impact minority diseases that require attention; recognizing the role that addressing health disparities must play in any delivery system reform efforts; and increasing access to sexual and reproductive health services and education for youth.

Working to achieve health equity across this nation is not only the right thing to do, but it's an economic imperative. Racial health disparities are associated with an estimated \$35 billion in excess healthcare expenditures, \$10 billion in illness-related lost productivity, and nearly \$200 billion in premature deaths. The time is now to tackle health inequality in this country.

Please join us as an original co-sponsor to show your support for this pivotal health equity legislation. The deadline to sign on as an original cosponsor is **COB on Monday, April 23<sup>rd</sup>**. If you have questions, or to co-sponsor, please contact M.A. Keifer in Rep. Lee's office at [M.A.Keifer@mail.house.gov](mailto:M.A.Keifer@mail.house.gov) or x 5-2661.

Sincerely,



Barbara Lee  
Member of Congress



Judy Chu, PhD  
Member of Congress



Cedric L. Richmond  
Member of Congress



Michelle Lujan Grisham  
Member of Congress



Robin L. Kelly  
Member of Congress