[letter to be placed on your organization's letterhead]

Date

The Honorable Susan Talamantes Eggman

California State Senator

State Capitol, Room 4052

Sacramento, CA 95814

**RE: SUPPORT $180M Budget Request to establish a California Health Equity Fund**

Dear Senator Eggman,

 [Your organization], strongly supports the budget request for a one-time allocation of $180 million from the general fund over three years ($60 million/year) to create a California Health Equity Fund to address the devastating health and social inequities that have been wrought by COVID-19. The budget request is co-sponsored by the California Black Health Network, Latino Coalition for a Healthy California, Public Health Institute, Roots of Change, and Asian Pacific Partners for Empowerment, Advocacy and Leadership (APPEAL),

[insert text on your organization].

The need is ***urgent.*** Latino, Black, Native Hawaiian, Pacific Islander, Asian American, American Indian, LGBTQ and low-income residents are at higher risk of contracting and dying from COVID-19 and/or are enduring disproportionately high social impacts from the pandemic, including rising rates of job and income loss, insecure housing, and food insecurity.  In addition, stresses on families due to COVID-19, prolonged school closures, and limited  access to supportive resources  are exacerbating risks of childhood trauma which may have lasting negative impacts on their health and educational achievement.

We know that today’s suffering will further increase the risk of preventable hardship, illness and premature death in years to come unless we step in now to stop the cycle.

How a California Health Equity Fund would operate:

* Nonprofit organizations, clinics, tribal organizations and local health departments will be eligible to receive funds.
* Allowable uses will advance policy, systems, and  environmental changes that  address inequities  in any of the following areas: housing security, food security & healthy food systems, economic stability, education and childcare, community violence and hate crimes, health promoting built environments and environmental justice.
* Eligible areas will be those hardest-hit by COVID-19 and with elevated social and environmental risks for health inequities.
* Local grantees will use local needs assessments and indices of health inequities and social determinants of health to select issues from allowable uses that are most deeply affecting  their communities and implement strategies tailored to local conditions.
* The Fund will invest $10/capita/year, which represents less than 1/1000th of what California spends on health care.

Investing in a California Health Equity Fund will do more than help mitigate the human costs of COVID-19, it makes financial sense. Preventing Californians from needing health care and social services in the first place can also help contain healthcare costs for California families and for the State. The LAO’s November 2020 Medi-Cal Fiscal Outlook brief projects that Medi-Cal spending will increase by approximately $3.2 billion (10 percent) in 2021-22. Further, according to a 2020 California Health Care Foundation report, half of Californians said they had skipped or postponed health care in the past year because of rising costs and 42% felt the consequences in worse health outcomes.

If we change nothing about how we fund health equity, nothing will change. Dedicated funding for nonprofit organizations, clinics, tribal organizations, and local health departments to address the devastating impacts of COVID-19 is essential to dismantle the legacy of structural racism that has compounded deep health inequities in California.

Sincerely,

[Name]

[Title]

[Org]

We will forward your letter to the members cc’d below.

Cc: Members of the Senate Committee on Health and Human Services

Senator Nancy Skinner, Chair, Senate Budget & Fiscal Review Committee

Assemblymember Philip Y. Ting , Chair, Assembly Budget Committee

Assemblymember Joaquin Arambula, MD, Chair, Assembly Budget Subcommittee #1 on Health and Human Services