CONGRESS, IMPLEMENT KNOWN SOLUTIONS TO REDUCE LONG-STANDING RACIAL DISPARITIES IN THE UNITED STATES

The protests roiling the United States, an expression of the visceral feelings of profound injustice felt by millions of Americans of color, is an opportunity for change. Deep structural disparities have widened over time, keeping millions of Americans from achieving their potential. Significant, unequal access to quality education, healthcare and housing maintain deep levels of poverty and poor health outcomes amongst people of color and the poor. A lack of reform in policing and criminal justice reform condemn many Americans of color from being able to rebuild their lives, locking them into poor and unhealthy conditions.

Dr. Michele Barry, chair of the Consortium of Universities for Global Health (CUGH) said, “These protests remind us we need to reassess how justness is about protecting the most vulnerable in our society as well as globally. America needs to rebuild its leadership in this space.”

Dr. Keith Martin, Executive Director of CUGH said, “This is a time of reckoning and an opportunity for change. The protests, and the COVID-19 pandemic which has disproportionately caused much higher levels of mortality for people of color, have shone a sharp light on the deep structural inequities that rob African Americans and other minorities from living safe, healthy lives.”

We call on Congress to work with state legislatures to invest in public health, primary care, quality education, housing, infrastructure and environmental cleanups, targeting those communities that are the poorest in America. They should use President Obama’s 2015 Task Force Report as a roadmap for police reform and implement judicial reform proposals that ensure public safety, while strengthening rehabilitation and reintegration of the convicted into society. Doing this will build a stronger, safer and more equitable America for all.