December 21, 2021

The Honorable Xavier Becerra
Secretary, U.S. Department of Health & Human Services
200 Independence Avenue, S.W.
Washington, DC 20201

Dear Mr. Secretary:

As members of the Congressional Black Caucus, the Congressional Hispanic Caucus, and the Congressional Asian Pacific American Caucus, we write to you to urge the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) to help close the health disparities in cancer care among communities of color through early testing. Presently, there is a lifesaving multi-cancer early detection (MCED) test that can screen for over fifty cancers but is currently only available to patients who can afford to pay almost $1,000 for the test out of pocket. As communities of color bear the disproportionate burden of cancer, we are hopeful your Department can help facilitate increased access to this groundbreaking test for everyone.

According to the American Cancer Society, African Americans have the highest death rate and shortest survival of any racial/ethnic group for most cancers in the United States. Having just observed Breast Cancer Awareness Month, we are troubled by statistics that show Latina women are measurably more likely to be diagnosed with breast cancer at an advanced stage than white women. Where heart disease is the leading killer of most ethnic communities, cancer is the leading cause of death for Asian Americans.

There is no greater tool in fighting cancer than early detection. As we have seen with the few cancers that do have widely available early detection tests—like cervical, breast, prostate, and colorectal cancers—early detection identifies cancers while still local and potentially curable. Early detection saves lives, yet underrepresented groups and communities of color often do not have the same access to early detection as others. This is a critical health equity issue, and we are asking HHS to help close the gap in access.

MCED testing has been broadly described as a “game-changer.” Indeed, the one test currently on the market has the ability to detect over fifty cancers through a single blood draw, and other tests will likely become available in the coming years. President Biden’s 2020 campaign promise to cure cancer is within reach with early detection, but other regulatory bodies have been erecting barriers to widespread access to current testing options by focusing primarily on issues unrelated to health care and health disparities. Our communities do not have the luxury of waiting for economic theories to be debated while we die preventable deaths. We commend the President’s commitment to investing $200 million in genomic testing as a response to the COVID-19 pandemic and are turning to you in hopes of refocusing the discussion on how to get
MCED testing to as broad a universe as possible, as soon as possible, regardless of race or socioeconomic status.

We look forward to working with you to achieve this critical goal.

Sincerely,

Stephanie Murphy
Member of Congress

Ritchie Torres
Member of Congress

J. Luis Correa
Member of Congress

Alma S. Adams, Ph.D.
Member of Congress

Colin Allred
Member of Congress

Karen Bass
Member of Congress

Anthony G. Brown
Member of Congress

Andre Carson
Member of Congress

Joaquin Castro
Member of Congress

Henry Cuellar
Member of Congress

Adriano Espaillat
Member of Congress

Sylvia R. Garcia
Member of Congress

Vicente Gonzalez
Member of Congress

Jahana Hayes
Member of Congress

Sheila Jackson Lee
Member of Congress

Pete Aguilar
Member of Congress

Nanette Diaz Barragán
Member of Congress

Ami Bera, M.D.
Member of Congress

Tony Cárdenas
Member of Congress

Troy A. Carter
Member of Congress

Yvette D. Clarke
Member of Congress

Veronica Escobar
Member of Congress

Jesús G. “Chuy” García
Member of Congress

Jimmy Gomez
Member of Congress

Al Green
Member of Congress

Steven Horsford
Member of Congress

Sara Jacobs
Member of Congress
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Role</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Brenda L. Lawrence</td>
<td>Member of Congress</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Barbara Lee</td>
<td>Member of Congress</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teresa Leger Fernandez</td>
<td>Member of Congress</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ted W. Lieu</td>
<td>Member of Congress</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lucy McBath</td>
<td>Member of Congress</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gregory W. Meeks</td>
<td>Member of Congress</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grace Meng</td>
<td>Member of Congress</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grace Napolitano</td>
<td>Member of Congress</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez</td>
<td>Member of Congress</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Donald M. Payne, Jr.</td>
<td>Member of Congress</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Scott Peters</td>
<td>Member of Congress</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Deborah K. Ross</td>
<td>Member of Congress</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lucille Roybal-Allard</td>
<td>Member of Congress</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bobby L. Rush</td>
<td>Member of Congress</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Linda T. Sánchez</td>
<td>Member of Congress</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Darren Soto</td>
<td>Member of Congress</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Marilyn Strickland</td>
<td>Member of Congress</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thomas R. Suozzi</td>
<td>Member of Congress</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Juan Vargas</td>
<td>Member of Congress</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Filemon Vela</td>
<td>Member of Congress</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bonnie Watson Coleman</td>
<td>Member of Congress</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>