

There is broad recognition that COVID-19 does not affect all people and communities equally – in fact, the pandemic has laid bare not just structural inequity of our health care system, but also the life and death consequences of underlying health conditions spawned by a legacy of racism and inequity. Consumer health advocates are important leaders in informing any policy decisions that respond to this crisis – we have the opportunity to educate and influence any final outcome and demand that it centers those who are traditionally excluded. The following issue briefs follow a format of identifying the problem and offering a policy solution. We encourage you to add your own consumer stories of lived experience and any specific state and community information that will inspire lawmakers to craft solutions that meet the moment. We have developed briefs for the following priorities – these align with Community Catalyst’s priorities for an equitable response to the COVID-19 pandemic. Take a look – and let us know how we can support your work:

- **[Strengthening our Response: Leverage Medicaid to Save Lives.](#)** Congress should enhance the Federal Medical Assistance Percentage (FMAP) by a net 14 percentage points and sustain the match for the duration of the economic downturn. This should be coupled with a maintenance of effort (MOE) provision to ensure that people do not lose coverage. Enhanced matching funds should also be available to the “Medicaid expansion” population (not to exceed 100% FMAP), providing states with necessary support to cover the growing number of uninsured people during the pandemic and as the country economically recovers.
- **[Strengthening our Response: Protect Consumers from Medical Debt.](#)** Congress should suspend medical debt collection, protect federal stimulus payments from garnishment, eliminate cost sharing associated with COVID-19 treatment and related care and eliminate fees for uninsured patients during the state of emergency.
- **[Strengthening our Response: Robust Disaggregated Data Collection and Reporting.](#)** Congress must pass legislation that directs HHS and CDC, as well as the entities that make up COVID-19 surveillance systems, to collect, analyze and report data that is disaggregated across race, ethnicity, primary language, sex, gender identity, sexual orientation, age, socioeconomic status, disability status, zip-code and other demographic information that is transparent and accessible and is used to best tailor programs and policies to meet the needs of consumers.
- **[Strengthening our Response: Make Coverage Affordable.](#)** Congress must eliminate Marketplace premiums for all with income under 200 percent FPL, capping premiums at a percent of income, and adopting a smooth, gradual sliding scale affordability schedule.
- **[Strengthening our Response: Support Home Care Workers and Protect Consumers with Long-Term Care Needs.](#)** Congress should provide home care workers and their employers with appropriate PPE, improve wages and workplace protections for home care workers and prioritize funding that enables states to expand HCBS services.