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Biden Releases National Strategy for The COVID-19 Response and Pandemic Preparedness; Signs Executive Actions to Expand Testing, Administer Vaccines, Advance Racial Equity, and Reopen Schools and Businesses

Today, President Biden Administration released their 200 page National Strategy for the COVID-19 Response and Pandemic Preparedness.

The National Strategy provides a roadmap to guide America out of the worst public health crisis in a century. It outlines an actionable plan across the federal government to address the COVID-19 pandemic, including twelve initial executive actions that will be issued by President Biden during his first two days in office:

The National Strategy **is organized around seven goals:**

1. Restore trust with the American people.
2. Mount a safe, effective, and comprehensive vaccination campaign.
3. Mitigate spread through expanding masking, testing, treatments, data, health care workforce, and clear public health standards.
4. Immediately expand emergency relief and exercise the Defense Production Act.
5. Safely reopen schools, businesses, and travel while protecting workers.
6. Protect those most at risk and advance equity, including across racial, ethnic and rural/urban lines.

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7. Restore U.S. leadership globally and build better preparedness for future threats.

To execute on the National Strategy, the White House will establish a COVID-19 Response Office responsible for coordinating the pandemic response across all federal departments and agencies. Through implementation of the National Strategy, the United States will make immediate progress on the seven goals. To monitor outcomes, the National Strategy will establish a data-driven, evidence-based approach to evaluating America's progress in the fight against COVID-19.

In order to get the administration's National Strategy jumpstarted President Biden just signed 10 Executive Orders and other directives that aim to Expand Testing, Administer Vaccines, Advance Racial Equity, and Reopen Schools and Businesses.

Below are details on the steps that President Biden is taking today to immediately put his National Strategy into action:

Reopen Schools, Businesses, And Travel

Help Protect Workers from COVID-19

President Biden signed an Executive Order **calling on the Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) to immediately release clear guidance for employers to help keep workers safe from COVID-19 exposure**. It also asks OSHA and Mine Safety and Health Administration to determine whether to establish emergency temporary standards that require employers to take steps to keep workers safe from COVID-19 and it directs OSHA to enforce worker health and safety requirements, targeting the worst violators. The order instructs agencies to explore ways to protect workers who are not always covered by OSHA standards, such as those who are self-employed.

Promote Safe Travel

President Biden signed an Executive Order to require mask-wearing in airports, on certain modes of public transportation, including many trains, airplanes, maritime vessels, and intercity buses. **For air travel**, this Executive Order also requires international travelers to produce proof of a negative COVID-19 test prior to departing for the United States and to comply with CDC guidelines for self-isolation and self-quarantine upon arrival. The Executive Order also calls for the consideration of additional public health measures in domestic travel and for consultation with foreign governments and other stakeholders to implement public health measures for safe travel, including at land and sea borders.

Direct Action to Support Students & Safely Reopen Schools

President Biden signed an Executive Order directing the Departments of Education and Health and Human Services (HHS) to provide guidance on safe reopening and operating for schools, child care providers, and institutions of higher education. The Order directs the Departments of Education and Health and Human Services to collect data around reopening and school closures so state and local officials have metrics to inform decision-making and can better understand the impact of closures on students from families with low-incomes, students of color, English-language learners, students with disabilities and others.

The COVID-19 Response Team will work to ensure that testing materials, support for contact tracing, and vaccinations for teachers are equitably provided to support in-person care and learning. **Finally, the**

order encourages the Federal Communications Commission to increase connectivity options for students lacking reliable home broadband, so that they can continue to learn if their schools are operating remotely.

Expand Emergency Relief And Exercise The Defense Production Act (DPA)

Manufacture and Deliver Supplies for Vaccination, Testing, and Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)

President Biden signed Executive Order directing relevant agencies to exercise all appropriate authorities, **including the Defense Production Act (DPA)**, to accelerate manufacturing, delivery, and administration to meet shortfalls in equipment and supplies needed for the COVID-19 response, beginning with action to increase the availability of critical supplies such as N95 masks, isolation gowns, nitrile gloves, PCR sample collection swabs, test reagents, pipette tips, laboratory analysis machines for PCR tests, high-absorbency foam swabs, nitrocellulose material for rapid antigen tests, rapid test kits, and all the necessary equipment and material to accelerate the manufacture, delivery, and administration of COVID-19 vaccine.

Reimburse States So They Can Deploy the Emergency Personnel and Supplies Americans Need

President Biden signed a Presidential Memorandum directing the Federal Emergency Management Administration (FEMA) to increase federal reimbursement to states and Tribes from 75 percent to 100 percent of the cost for National Guard personnel and emergency supplies, such as PPE, cleaning and sanitizing efforts, and the personnel and equipment needed to create vaccination centers. The order also includes restoring full reimbursement for eligible costs necessary to support safe school reopening through the FEMA Disaster Relief Fund. This Memorandum also expands FEMA resources for Tribal governments.

Vaccination Campaign

Take Immediate Actions to Convert Vaccines into Vaccinations

To meet the aggressive vaccination target of 100 million shots by the end of his first 100 days in office, President Biden will take immediate action to improve the vaccination program. Yesterday, he directed FEMA to begin standing up the first federally-supported community vaccination centers, with the goal of standing up 100 centers in the next month. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) will also launch the federal pharmacy program -- making vaccines available to communities in their local pharmacies beginning next month. And, he tasked the U.S. Public Health Services Commissioned Corps with expanding its workforce and preparing for deployment. Central to this effort will be expanded support and collaboration with state, local, Tribal and territorial governments, including the establishment of COVID Response Liaisons for each state -- a model based on the response to Hurricane Sandy.

Expand Testing, Treatment, And The Public Health Workforce, And Establishing Clear Public Health Standards

Establish the Pandemic Testing Board, Expand Testing, and Strengthen the Public Health Workforce

President Biden signed an Executive Order that establishes the COVID-19 Pandemic Testing Board to bring the full force of the federal government's expertise to expanding testing supply and increasing access to testing. **The federal government will increase testing capacity by directing the use of the DPA and other authorities to procure more tests and expand manufacturing capacity where possible.** The Executive Order will promote surge capacity for testing in the United States, onshore test manufacturing, expand the public health workforce, support COVID-19 screening for schools, and ensure that underserved communities, including communities of color, can equitably access tests.

Bolster Access to COVID-19 Treatments and Clinical Care

President Biden signed an Executive Order directing studies, including large-scale randomized trials, to identify treatments for COVID-19 and to ensure that such studies address the needs of diverse populations. The Executive Order establishes a comprehensive, integrated, equitable, and coordinated preclinical drug discovery and development program to allow therapeutics to be evaluated and developed in response to pandemic threats. The Order also outlines steps to improve clinical care, provide assistance to long-term care facilities and intermediate care facilities for people with disabilities, increase health care workforce capacity, expand access to programs designed to meet long-term health needs of patients recovering from COVID-19, and support access to safe and effective COVID-19 therapies for those without coverage.

Improve Data to Combat COVID-19

The federal government will work with state, local, Tribal and territorial governments to aggregate and analyze data to track access to vaccines and testing, reopen schools and businesses, and address disparities in COVID-19 infections and health outcomes. **The federal government will create publicly available dashboards with national and state-by-state level information, consistent with privacy protections, on cases, testing, vaccinations, and hospital admissions to make real-time information available to policymakers and the public.**

Protect Those Most At Risk And Address Inequities Faced By Communities Of Color And Other Underserved Groups

Health Equity in the Nation's COVID-19 Response

President Biden signed an Executive Order to ensure an equitable pandemic response and recovery. The order establishes a COVID-19 Health Equity Task Force to provide specific recommendations to the President for allocating resources and funding in communities with inequities in COVID-19 outcomes by race, ethnicity, geography, disability, and other considerations. The federal government will expand equity data collection; increase access to PPE, testing, therapies, and vaccines in underserved communities and high-risk settings; and assess and update pandemic response plans to ensure equity. The health workforce, including community-based workers, will be expanded to assist with contact tracing, vaccination, and linkage to care. Additionally, the Biden Administration will work with states, local jurisdictions, Tribal communities, and territories to address unmet basic needs, including food, housing, and childcare, for individuals and families affected by COVID-19.

Restore U.S. Global Leadership And Build Better Preparedness

Advance U.S. Global Leadership, Support the Health and Humanitarian Response to COVID-19, and Protect Against Future Biological Threats

President Biden signed a Presidential Directive to restore America's leadership, support the international pandemic response effort, promote resilience for future threats, and advance global health security and the Global Health Security Agenda. This directive restores U.S. leadership and seeks to support the international health and humanitarian response to the COVID-19 pandemic and its secondary impacts, global health security and diplomacy, and better biopreparedness and resilience for emerging and future biological threats.

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