Disparities in COVID-19 health outcomes stem from health inequities rooted in systemic and unjust social and economic policies. The pandemic has worsened existing health inequities, disproportionately affecting communities of color, immigrant communities, people with disabilities, and other marginalized groups. Congress must act now. This graphic illustrates concrete steps that the federal government and states must take to mitigate the impact of the immediate crisis, and policy solutions to adopt once the national emergency declaration has been lifted.

PRIORITY 1
Address the Social Determinants of Health
Social determinants of health are the conditions in which people live, learn, grow, work, and play. They are key factors which drive health outcomes and healthcare costs, and they have been completely upended by COVID-19.

PRIORITY 2
Build Strong Financial Incentives for Improved Health Equity in Our Health Care System
We can help close the disparity gap by integrating performance measures into payment models that are to reduce health disparities.

PRIORITY 3
Organize and Build a Robust Health Infrastructure in Marginalized Communities
The equitable allocation of new resources is critical for many low-resourced areas to bolster the capacity needed to implement staff-intensive steps like widespread testing and contact tracing.

PRIORITY 4
Ensure Equitable Access to Affordable Health Insurance
Health coverage must be available and affordable to the entire population, no exceptions.


For nearly 2x more information see Families USA’s companion report, The Fierce Urgency of Now: Federal and State Policy Recommendations to Address Health Inequities in the Era of COVID-19.