



**For Immediate Release:**

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## **Telehealth Equity Coalition to Drive Systemic Solutions for Greater Access to Telehealth Among Underserved Populations**

*New Coalition Platform Critical to Building Community Trust, Improving Policy and Business Practices*

**Washington, D.C. (February 2, 2021)** -- The pandemic has brought to light many weaknesses in our healthcare system, but also elevated new tools to improve access to quality care. With millions of Americans unable to access in-person healthcare services, many were able to find a new path of accessing treatment through telehealth. Unfortunately, marginalized and underserved communities still struggled to access care despite broadening telehealth services due to a range of factors including digital literacy and access to technology. While telehealth visits dramatically increased throughout 2020, use of services was not equal among the population.

The [Telehealth Equity Coalition](#) (TEC) has formed to improve access to quality and affordable healthcare by increasing adoption of telehealth, especially among those who have been left out or left behind. Together with nonprofit, academic, and industry partners, TEC will offer a unique voice to optimize equitable telehealth delivery and utilization.

Through this Coalition, The National Health IT Collaborative for the Underserved, Inc. (NHIT®) will contribute access to the NHIT – Data Fusion Center for members of TEC. The Data Fusion Center is a project that brings together experts from industry, academia and communities, to assess and measure important indicators of access and use of telehealth.

Founding members of the TEC include: Adaptation Health, American Telemedicine Association, BlackDoctor.org, Foley & Lardner, Grapevine Health, Hims & Hers, Howard University Dept. of Community & Family Medicine, Health Innovation Alliance, National Digital Inclusion Alliance, National Health IT Collaborative For the Underserved, National MS Society, and TechNet.

"Equity is essential when it comes to healthcare, and equity when it comes to telehealth should be no different. Without truly equitable telehealth access, our country is exacerbating existing disparities. Participating in the Telehealth Equity Coalition represents a logical extension of NHIT's work to engage underserved populations in the development and use of health technology as a means to support and sustain health equity and economic viability," said **Luis Belen, CEO, National Health IT Collaborative**.

"With the exponential growth of telehealth over the last year, never has there been a more important time to focus on equity in providing this type of care. The Telehealth Equity Coalition's launch at this critical

juncture underscores the need to improve health equity for all communities by addressing systemic barriers to equitable telehealth adoption,” said **Mignon L. Clyburn, former Commissioner at the Federal Communications Commission.**

“The pandemic has demonstrated the unique benefits of telehealth to provide high quality care while keeping patients and healthcare providers safe, yet, this same essential service has laid bare existing inequities in the broader healthcare ecosystem. With the Telehealth Equity Coalition we intend to harness the potential of this challenging moment and improve equitable access to safe, high quality telehealth care,” said **April Mims, VP of Policy, Hims & Hers.**

"Access to quality care and producing great and consistent outcomes for underserved communities is a long standing blight on our healthcare system. Now we have at our fingertips the opportunity to break this trend and get people the care they need via telehealth. Health Innovation Alliance is proud to be a founding member of TEC and contribute to its critical mission because of the difference we will make in people's lives,” said **Joel White, Executive Director, Health Innovation Alliance.**

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### **About the Telehealth Equity Coalition**

TEC was formed to bring diverse stakeholders together to develop policies and advocate for equity in telehealth. By using a data-driven approach, TEC will help more people access this method of care. We believe in the power of telehealth to transform all communities. Our guiding values are: equity, inclusion, representation, accountability, collaboration, and innovation. We are driven to improve access to quality and affordable healthcare by increasing adoption of telehealth, especially among marginalized and underserved populations.