The United States faces a public health crisis on a level we have not experienced for 100 years. It is reasonable to expect that *all* people should be able to rely on the government and health institutions to protect them during such an emergency.

But for many Latinx/Latino(a)/Hispanic individuals, trust in the government does not come easily, as our health has often been ignored and even exploited. It is no surprise that polls indicate Latinx/Latino(a)/Hispanic Americans are among the groups least likely to get vaccinated against COVID-19.

We are 21 Latinx/Latino(a)/Hispanic members of the National Academy of Medicine, the premier health science organization in the United States. Together, we are scientists, doctors, nurses, health care professionals, and public health experts.

Many of us fought our way into health professions specifically to care for the health of our community. We have devoted our careers to ensuring that everyone — regardless of race — receives the care required for optimal health. This is why we support and encourage you to accept the COVID-19 vaccine.

A recent survey by the Pew Research Center reported that half of Hispanic Americans have lost a family member or friend to COVID-19 [1]. An analysis of recent CDC data from the Kaiser Family Foundation indicates that Black and Hispanic people are still less likely than their White counterparts to have received one dose of the COVID-9 vaccine, which puts them at increased risk of complications from the virus. [2].

With numbers like these, we believe this moment requires us and our colleagues to stand up and lead: to help save our people and nation, to protect the Latinx/Latino(a)/Hispanic community, to protect all Americans, and to break the grip COVID-19 has on our country.

The COVID-19 vaccine is widely available, safe, and effective. Nearly 200 million Americans have already received their first dose. The vaccine has been tested by teams of outstanding scientists in many different countries — including Latinx/Latino(a)/Hispanic scientists who supported its development and reviewed it for the Food and Drug Administration. Numerous Latinx/Latino(a)/Hispanic public health professionals are also leading the efforts to ensure that the distribution of the vaccine is fair and equitable.

We have reviewed the science and are confident that the research has been done correctly. While we understand why there might be hesitancy about getting vaccinated, we also understand the risks of being infected by the virus. We are convinced that the impacts of COVID-19 infection are far, far worse than any potential side effects from vaccination.

The fact that we have lost more than 650,000 mothers, fathers, sisters, brothers, daughters, sons, neighbors, and friends to COVID-19 in the U.S. is a clear indicator that this virus is deadly and debilitating. We understand the science and we understand our community. We have already received our vaccinations and our families are vaccinated to ensure we can protect each other.

We encourage you to get vaccinated. Remember, the vaccines are free! Get vaccinated for yourself, for your family, for your friends, and for our community.

1. Noe-Bustamante, Luis, Jens Manuel Krogstad and Mark Hugo Lopez "Many Hispanics have had COVID-19 or lost someone to it" *Pew Research Center* Jul. 15, 2021 https://www.pewresearch.org/race-ethnicity/2021/07/15/many-hispanics-have-had-covid-19-or-lost-someone-to-it/
2. Ndugga, Nambi, Latoya Hill, Samatha Artiga, and Sweta Haldar, "Latest Data on COVID-19 Vaccinations by Race/Ethnicity" Kaiser Family Foundation Oct. 04, 2021 https://www.kff.org/coronavirus-covid-19/issue-brief/latest-data-on-covid-19-vaccinations-race-ethnicity/

Latinx/Latino(a)/Hispanic members of the National Academy of Medicine urging Latinx/Latino(a)/Hispanic Americans to get the COVID-19 vaccine.

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