



**Statement presented by Dr. Elizabeth Ofili,
Chair, ABC Board of Directors
Preliminary Framework for Equitable Allocation of COVID-19 Vaccine
Publish Listening Session – September 2, 2020**

We are pleased that the Committee for the Preliminary Framework for Equitable Allocation of COVID-19 Vaccine, proposes an intentional effort to develop an overarching framework to assist policymakers in planning for equitable allocation of vaccines and other therapies against COVID-19, as they become available. We appreciate the evidence-driven review process for setting priorities for equitable allocation of the vaccine.

The ABC is especially interested in: 1) Health disparities and other health access issues; 2) health care and front line workers; 3) individuals and populations at higher risk (specifically, racial and ethnic minority groups).

A professional medical society with an established lay community, such as the ABC, will be needed to mitigate vaccine hesitancy, especially among high-priority minority populations.

As stated in the report (lines 834-836): “Ultimately, the mitigation of health inequities includes development and deployment of distribution systems that ensure that people who are allocated a vaccine actually receive it (e.g., by taking it to where they are) and can afford it, even if they are hard to reach”.

We hope that the final committee report will have a transparent and accountable process that assures access of African Americans and other racial minorities to the vaccine, with recommendations for the real cost of care such as co-pays, and practice infrastructure to administer the vaccine. ABC physicians serve predominant African Americans and other minority patients, and are a trusted voice to overcome vaccine hesitancy and refusal. This engagement process takes time and resources and should be supported as part of an equitable distribution process.

Mitigation of Health Inequities (lines 1054-1062): we strongly recommend that mitigating health inequities should specifically prioritize ethnic minorities who are most severely impacted by COVID-19. The ABC and others have documented that AA have poorer outcomes of care, including maternal mortality and morbidity, regardless of SES. Mitigating such inequities requires accurate vaccine data collection by race/ethnicity.

Another challenge is the severe under-representation of African Americans in current COVID-19 vaccine trials. The ABC welcomes the opportunity to provide real-world data collection and pharmacovigilance, through a collaborative and carefully evaluated COVID-19 vaccine and therapeutics registry.