



PRESS RELEASE

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THE ASSOCIATION OF UNIVERSITY CENTERS ON DISABILITIES (AUCD) JOINS NATIONAL COVID-19 NETWORK TO BUILD RESILIENCE AGAINST PANDEMIC AMONG THE DISABILITY COMMUNITY.

Nearly 40 national partner organizations band together to bring communities culturally appropriate information and health services.

Silver Spring, MD (February 11, 2021) – Association of University Centers on Disabilities (AUCD) joined Morehouse School of Medicine (MSM)'s National COVID-19 Resiliency Network (NCRN) of [partners](#) to inform community-driven response, recovery, and resiliency strategies for addressing the impact of COVID-19 on communities.

In response to the needs of the disability community, we have established a communications strategy to support the development of linguistically and culturally competent messaging and materials by representing plain language as an accessible format and bringing awareness of COVID-19 vaccine information. We will also conduct formative research to identify and describe a target audience so that we can understand the factors that influence the behaviors, attitudes and practices of a specified target audience. The formative research activities will include in-depth interviews, focus groups, and pre-testing messaging and materials. The results of the data collection will inform our communications and dissemination efforts. We are also participating in a Community-Based Prevention social marketing training hosted by the University of South Florida. This training will inform the formative research and dissemination of COVID-19 related messaging and materials to our target audience.

"AUCD applauds Morehouse School of Medicine for ensuring that the interests and needs of persons with disabilities are included in the National COVID-19 Resiliency Network. Many initiatives that focus on minority health are not inclusive of persons and populations that experience intersectionality - specifically those from underserved communities at the nexus of disability, race, and ethnicity," Said [Tawara Goode, MA](#), President of the AUCD Board of Directors, Director Georgetown University Center for Excellence in Developmental Disabilities, Director Georgetown University National Center for Cultural Competence.

"We are excited and proud to be a partner in the National COVID-19 Resiliency Network (NCRN)," said [John Tschida, MPP](#), Executive Director at AUCD. "Having people with lived experience at the intersection of disability, race and ethnicity involved in this project from the beginning is paramount to addressing COVID-19 vaccine hesitancy, the increased mortality rate, and discrimination against the disability community in the response to COVID-19. When communities are involved in planning and implementation such as in NCRN, we will be successful."

The launch of the NCRN occurs alongside the release of new digital technology accessible through the [NCRN website](#). It provides location-based recommendations on where community members can get a

COVID-19 test, fill prescriptions and get a COVID-19 vaccine when distribution increases in the coming months.

“Our national network connects individuals, families, community organizations and clinical providers to timely and relevant COVID-19 information and services in their neighborhood,” said **Dominic Mack, MD, MBA**, Professor of Family Medicine and Co-Director of the National COVID-19 Resiliency Network in the [National Center for Primary Care](#) at MSM.

The NCRN launch follows a [\\$40 million award](#) from the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services Office of Minority Health to coordinate a strategic network focused on delivering COVID-19-related information to communities hardest hit by the pandemic.

To access new COVID-19 resources, visit www.msm.edu/ncrn.

About the Association of University Centers on Disabilities (AUCD)

The Association of University Centers on Disabilities (AUCD), located in Silver Spring, MD, promotes and supports a national network of interdisciplinary centers on disabilities. The members of AUCD represent every U.S. state and territory. AUCD and its members work to advance policy and practice through research, education, leadership, and services for and with individuals with developmental and other disabilities, their families, and communities. For more information, visit AUCD's website, www.aucd.org.

About Morehouse School of Medicine

Morehouse School of Medicine, located in Atlanta, GA, exists to improve the health and well-being of individuals and communities; increase the diversity of the health professional and scientific workforce; and address primary health care through programs in education, research, and service, with emphasis on people of color and the underserved urban and rural populations in Georgia, the nation, and the world. MSM is among the nation's leading educators of primary care physicians and has twice been recognized as the top institution among U.S. medical schools for its dedication to the social mission of education. The faculty and alumni are noted in their fields for excellence in teaching, research, and public policy, and are known in the community for exceptional, culturally appropriate patient care. Morehouse School of Medicine is accredited by the Commission on Colleges of the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools to award doctorate and master's degrees.

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