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JOSEPH R. BIDEN, JR. **(/PEOPLE/PRESIDENT/JOSEPH-R-BIDEN-JR)**

Press Release - President-elect Joe Biden Announces Key Members of Health Team

December 07, 2020

This deeply qualified, diverse team will be ready on day one to contain the COVID pandemic; ensure the safe, free, and equitable distribution of vaccines; make sure every American has access to affordable, quality health care; and guard against the full range of health threats facing our nation.

WASHINGTON - Today, President-elect Joe Biden announced key nominations and appointments of his health team, including Xavier Becerra, Secretary of Health and Human Services; Dr. Vivek Murthy, Surgeon General; Dr. Rochelle Walensky, Director of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention; Dr. Marcella Nunez-Smith, COVID-19 Equity Task Force Chair; Dr. Anthony Fauci, Chief Medical Adviser to the President on COVID-19, who will also continue in his role as Director of the National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases; and Jeff Zients, Coordinator of the COVID-19 Response and Counselor to the President. In addition, former White House and Pentagon senior advisor Natalie Quillian will serve as Deputy Coordinator of the COVID-19 Response.

This is a team that looks like America and brings together leaders with deep experience in public health, government, and crisis management. They are experts in their fields who will restore public trust in the pandemic

response by leading with facts, science, integrity, and a laser-focus on bringing COVID-19 under control. Together, they will advise President-elect Biden and Vice President-elect Harris on implementing a whole-of-government response to surge testing and tracing to slow the spread of the virus, protect frontline workers, and ensure the safe and efficient delivery of treatments and vaccines at no cost to the American people. And, they will help fulfill the President-elect's vision of making health care a right — not a privilege — for all Americans, building on the Affordable Care Act to lower health care costs and tackle prescription drug costs.

President-elect Joe Biden said, "This trusted and accomplished team of leaders will bring the highest level of integrity, scientific rigor, and crisis-management experience to one of the toughest challenges America has ever faced — getting the pandemic under control so that the American people can get back to work, back to their lives, and back to their loved ones. This team of world-class medical experts and public servants will be ready on day one to mobilize every resource of the federal government to expand testing and masking, oversee the safe, equitable, and free distribution of treatments and vaccines, re-open schools and businesses safely, lower prescription drug and other health costs and expand affordable health care to all Americans, and rally the country and restore the belief that there is nothing beyond America's capacity if we do it together."

Vice President-elect Kamala Harris said, "Containing this coronavirus pandemic and opening our economy responsibly require listening to experts and leaders like the ones we are bringing together on this health care team. They are some of America's top physicians, public health experts, and crisis-tested public servants, and they reflect the very best of our nation. This is the team that the American people need and deserve to make quality, affordable health care available to all and to help make sure safe and effective vaccines — as well as testing and treatment — are free and equitably distributed. President-elect Biden and I will work closely with this team to marshal the full resources and capabilities of the United States of America to save lives, contain this pandemic, and build better preparedness for future pandemics and other health threats."

This diverse and experienced slate of nominations and appointments includes some of the nation's most accomplished problem-solving leaders in crisis management and public health:

- **Xavier Becerra**, the Attorney General of California and a long-time champion of expanding access to health care, is nominated to serve as Secretary of Health and Human Services. A former member of Congress who helped drive passage of the Affordable Care Act, Becerra led the defense of the law in the Supreme Court last month. If confirmed, Becerra will be the first Latino to lead the Department of Health and Human Services.
- **Dr. Vivek Murthy**, a distinguished physician, research scientist, and former Vice Admiral in the Public Health Service Commissioned Corps, is nominated to serve as Surgeon General of the United States. He was previously confirmed by the Senate to serve in the same capacity, holding the post as 'America's Doctor' between 2014 and 2017. A trusted national voice on health issues and a long-time advisor to President-elect Biden, he currently serves as co-chair of the President-elect's COVID-19 transition Advisory Board.
- **Dr. Rochelle Walensky**, a leading expert on virus testing, prevention, and treatment, is appointed to serve as Director of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. She has been on the front lines of the COVID-19 pandemic response in Massachusetts, serving as Chief of Infectious Diseases at Massachusetts General Hospital and a Professor of Medicine at Harvard Medical School.
- **Dr. Marcella Nunez-Smith**, one of the country's foremost experts on health care disparities, will serve as the COVID-19 Equity Task Force Chair. An Associate Professor of Medicine, Public Health, and Management at the Yale School of Medicine, she is the founding director of Yale's Equity Research and Innovation Center and co-chair of the President-elect's COVID-19 Transition Advisory Board. Dr. Nunez-Smith will advise the President-elect on a whole-of-government effort to reduce COVID-19 disparities in response, care, and treatment, including racial and ethnic disparities.
- **Dr. Anthony Fauci**, the nation's preeminent expert on infectious diseases and an adviser to six U.S. presidents, will serve as Chief Medical Adviser on COVID-19 to the President and continue in his role as Director of the National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases. Among the most trusted figures in the country throughout the pandemic and for decades prior, Dr. Fauci will remain an essential voice both in informing the public about health risks and safety measures and in helping the scientific community, the Biden-Harris administration, and local officials overcome the COVID-19 pandemic.

- **Jeff Zients**, an accomplished public servant widely known for his extraordinary track record successfully managing large and complex initiatives, will serve as Coordinator of the COVID-19 Response and Counselor to the President. Zients previously earned broad acclaim for his leadership of the 2013 HealthCare.gov tech surge and his oversight of the 'Cash for Clunkers' fuel-efficiency program. Zients will advise the president-elect on the implementation of the federal government's COVID response, including managing safe and equitable vaccine distribution, the pandemic supply chain, and coordination across federal agencies and state and local governments.
- **Natalie Quillian** will serve as Deputy Coordinator of the COVID-19 Response. Quillian, a national security expert and former White House and Pentagon senior advisor, played an instrumental role in coordinating the Obama-Biden administration's interagency response to the opioid epidemic.

The following White House announcements were made today:

Xavier Becerra, Secretary of Health and Human Services

[Link to hi-res photo \(https://buildbackbetter.gov/wp-content/uploads/2020/12/xyz_becerra.jpg\)](https://buildbackbetter.gov/wp-content/uploads/2020/12/xyz_becerra.jpg)

Xavier Becerra (*Hahv-ee-ayr Beh-seh-rah*) currently serves as the 33rd Attorney General of California, the first Latino to hold the position in the 171 years of its existence. As the leader of the nation's largest state-level Department of Justice, his work has focused on protecting underserved communities and fighting to safeguard the health and wellbeing of all Californians; in November 2020, he led the defense of the Affordable Care Act in the Supreme Court on behalf of twenty states and the District of Columbia.

Prior to his tenure as Attorney General, Becerra served twelve terms as a member of the U.S. House of Representatives, becoming a key fixture of the Committee on Ways and Means, Ranking Member of the Subcommittee on Social Security, and, ultimately, Chair of the House Democratic Caucus. The son of working-class parents who was the first member of his family to graduate from college, Becerra started his career as a legal aid attorney supporting clients contending with mental health issues before becoming a Deputy Attorney General in the California Department of Justice and serving

one term in the State Assembly. Originally from Sacramento, Becerra received his bachelor of arts degree from Stanford and his JD from Stanford Law School.

Dr. Vivek Murthy, Surgeon General

[Link to hi-res photo \(https://buildbackbetter.gov/wp-content/uploads/2020/12/xyz_murthy.jpg\)](https://buildbackbetter.gov/wp-content/uploads/2020/12/xyz_murthy.jpg)

Dr. Vivek Murthy (*Viv-ake Mur-thee*) was confirmed by the Senate in 2014 to serve as the 19th Surgeon General of the United States, and currently serves as co-chair of the President-elect's COVID-19 Advisory Board. A renowned physician, research scientist, author, and entrepreneur, Dr. Murthy is among the most trusted voices in America on matters of public health.

As "America's Doctor," Dr. Murthy helped lead the national response to a range of health challenges, including the Ebola and Zika viruses, the opioid crisis, and the growing threat of stress and loneliness to Americans' physical and mental wellbeing. Prior to his tenure as Surgeon General, Dr. Murthy co-founded VISIONS, a global HIV/AIDS education organization; the Swasthya Project, a rural health partnership that trained women in South India to become community health workers and educators; TrialNetworks, a technology company dedicated to improving collaboration and efficiency in clinical trials; and Doctors for America, a nonprofit mobilizing physicians and medical students to improve access to affordable care. His scientific research has focused on vaccine development and the participation of women and minorities in clinical trials. Raised in Miami, Dr. Murthy received his bachelor of arts degree from Harvard, his masters in business administration from the Yale School of Management, and his MD from the Yale School of Medicine.

Dr. Rochelle Walensky, Director of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention

[Link to hi-res photo \(https://buildbackbetter.gov/wp-content/uploads/2020/12/xyz_Walensky.jpg\)](https://buildbackbetter.gov/wp-content/uploads/2020/12/xyz_Walensky.jpg)

Dr. Rochelle Walensky (*Ruh-shell Wool-en-skee*) currently serves as Chief of the Division of Infectious Diseases at Massachusetts General Hospital and Professor of Medicine at Harvard Medical School. An influential scholar

whose pioneering research has helped advance the national and global response to HIV/AIDS, Dr. Walensky is one of America's most respected experts on the value of testing and treatment of deadly viruses.

A practicing infectious diseases physician, Dr. Walensky has been recognized internationally for her work to improve HIV screening and care in South Africa. She is a past Chair of Office of AIDS Research Advisory Council at the National Institutes of Health, Chair-elect of the HIV Medical Association, and has previously served as an advisor to both the World Health Organization and the Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS. Originally from Maryland, Dr. Walensky received her bachelor of arts degree from Washington University in St. Louis, her MD from the Johns Hopkins School of Medicine, and her masters in public health degree from the Harvard School of Public Health.

Dr. Marcella Nunez-Smith, COVID-19 Equity Task Force Chair

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Dr. Marcella Nunez-Smith (*Mar-sell-uh Noon-yez Smith*) currently serves as Associate Professor of Medicine, Public Health, and Management and Associate Dean for Health Equity Research at the Yale School of Medicine. A co-chair of the President-elect's COVID-19 Advisory Board, she is one of America's most distinguished and influential experts on persistent inequities in health care and health outcomes.

Dr. Nunez-Smith is the founding director of Yale's Equity Research and Innovation Center, a groundbreaking academic and policy organization created to address inequities in health and health care. She serves as a principal investigator on several leading research projects intended to assess and rectify systemic discrimination and racial disparities in the health care space, and created the NIH-funded Eastern Caribbean Health Outcomes Research Network to improve health outcomes in an historically underserved region. Originally from Saint Thomas, U.S. Virgin Islands, Dr. Nunez-Smith received her bachelor of arts degree from Swarthmore College, her MD from Jefferson Medical College, and her master of health science from Yale University.

Dr. Anthony Fauci, Chief Medical Adviser on COVID-19

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Dr. Anthony Fauci (*An-thuh-nee Fow-chee*) is one of America's most trusted and accomplished scientific voices, a world-renowned infectious disease expert who has served as Director of the National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases since 1984. A prominent adviser to the last six U.S. presidents on a broad range of health and medical issues, Dr. Fauci has played a critical role in shaping and implementing the national and global response to every major public health threat that has emerged over the last four decades.

In his current role, Dr. Fauci leads an expansive research portfolio covering the prevention, tracking, and treatment of both established and emerging contagions, as well as asthma, allergies, and other immune-related illnesses. He serves simultaneously as Chief of the Laboratory of Immunoregulation and Chief of the Immunopathogenesis Section at the National Institutes of Health, having largely pioneered the field of human immune response regulation with his early research. As a prominent scientific adviser throughout the HIV/AIDS crisis, he also helped lead the creation of the President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief, which has been credited with saving the lives of millions across the globe. In addition to a litany of awards and the 45 honorary degrees he has received from universities worldwide, he was awarded the Presidential Medal of Freedom by President George W. Bush in 2008. Born and raised in Brooklyn, Dr. Fauci received his bachelor of arts degree from the College of the Holy Cross, and his MD from Cornell University.

Jeff Zients, Coordinator of the COVID-19 Response and Counselor to the President

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Jeff Zients (*Jeff Zy-ence*) is a renowned crisis manager and public servant who has earned widespread acclaim for his ability to successfully navigate large, complex initiatives through formidable challenges. Among a litany of notable accomplishments, he is credited with having led both the 2013 tech

surge to revitalize HealthCare.gov as well as the 2009 'Cash for Clunkers' program to help revive the U.S. auto industry while improving fuel efficiency.

During his time in the Obama-Biden administration, Zients served as Director of the National Economic Council, Acting Director and Deputy Director of the Office of Management and Budget, and the inaugural Chief Performance Officer of the United States. He currently serves as co-chair of the Biden-Harris Transition. Previously, he was CEO of the holding company Cranemere, following decades of private sector experience as an executive, entrepreneur, and management consultant across a wide range of industries, including as CEO and Chairman of The Advisory Board Company. Born and raised in the Washington, DC area, Zients received his bachelor of science degree from Duke University.

Natalie Quillian, Deputy Coordinator of the COVID-19 Response

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Natalie Quillian (*Nat-uh-lee Kwill-ee-en*) is a national security expert and former White House and Pentagon senior advisor who most recently served as Deputy Campaign Manager for Biden for President, where she helped lead campaign operations, election security matters, and other management functions — including leading the campaign's approach to COVID-19 safety for the candidates, campaign staff, and thousands of volunteers. Quillian began her government career as a civil servant during the George W. Bush administration, and went on to serve all eight years in the Obama-Biden administration, where she played an instrumental role coordinating the interagency response to the opioid epidemic. She has served in a number of national security positions at the National Security Council and the Office of the Secretary of Defense, and as Deputy Assistant to the President and Senior Advisor to the White House Chief of Staff, working on complex interagency and crisis response matters.

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