Strengthening Health Security at the State Level

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Panelists: Sara Rosenbaum, Founding Chair, Department of Health Policy, Milken Institute School of Public Health, and Charleta Tavares, Former State Representative, WAND Board member share best practices for women lawmakers looking to address health care policy in their communities.

Problem: The coronavirus pandemic has been especially harmful for working women with a disproportionate impact on women of Black, Indigenous, and people of color (BIPOC) communities. The pandemic exacerbated systemic racial and socioeconomic inequalities, leaving BIPOC women at greater risk of infection and higher vulnerability to the harmful health, social and economic impacts of COVID-19. The increased health risks for women, especially BIPOC women, highlighted the nation’s woefully inadequate safety net and health care systems. When it comes to policymaking, women have the advantage of their own lived experiences, and as such, can use that experience to tie together how health reform reinforces economic stability. However, it helps to understand some of the political pitfalls that could get in the way of progress and prevent successful passage. Find a few recommendations from Sara Rosenbaum, Founding Chair, Department of Health Policy, Milken Institute School of Public Health, and Charleta Tavares, Former State Representative, WAND Board member below.

Based on the conversation, our panelists had the following policy recommendations:

- **Build your network of health policy experts.** Stay in touch with state legislators in Congress and agencies and programs that cover healthcare concerns of your constituents.
- **Increase state funding to hire more health care personnel.** States need to prepare for reviewing and renewing care for thousands of people throughout the country as a result of the new health care provisions in the Build Back Better Act. Funding will be needed to expand staff for claims and appeals.
- **Address racial disparities in healthcare.** The COVID-19 pandemic exposed the racial disparity issue throughout healthcare and our country. Build relationships with minority communities that have been affected and include their experiences to create inclusive policy.