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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: 2/16/2022

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Press Release – Establishment of the California Community Health Equity Alliance

Mental health stakeholders convene to prioritize community-informed solutions to effectively and meaningfully advance serious mental illness care for Black adults based on community needs.

It is estimated that over half (57%) of the US population of adults with mental illness do not receive treatment, and this unmet need is greater for racial and ethnic minorities. It's critical to note, rates of mental illness are similar among racial and ethnic groups. However, only one in three Black Americans who needs mental health care receives it. Historical racism and sociocultural factors impact these disparities in mental health and may impact help-seeking behaviors.

In response to these inequities, yesterday, February 15th, 2022, the California Community Health Equity Alliance convened for the first time. The California Community Health Equity Alliance is a collaboration of mental health stakeholders, established by Janssen Neuroscience and led by the California Council of Community Behavioral Health Agencies, Painted Brain, and California Institute for Behavioral Health Solutions to prioritize community-informed solutions to effectively and meaningfully advance serious mental illness care for Black adults based on community needs.

This meeting was just the first of inspiring and productive convenings, including individuals who have demonstrated a commitment to advancing health equity for Black community members. Thank you to all the leaders who came together to provide community-level solutions to effectively address the needs of Black communities impacted by inequities in California's mental health system including:

- Gigi Crowder, Black Minds Matter
- Carolina Valle, California Pan-Ethnic Health Network
- Le Ondra Clark Harvey & Sage Miller, California Council of Community Behavioral Health Agencies
- Percy Howard, California Institute for Behavioral Health Solutions
- Lishaun Francis, Children Now
- Russia Chavis, Community Health Councils
- Kedrick Johnson, Caren Sykes, Caroline Ignatuk, Molly Hope & Tori Benbow, Janssen Neuroscience
- Kelechi Ubozoh, Kelechi Ubozoh Consulting
- Christina Murphy, La Familia Family Counseling
- Courtney Lang, Langco + Partners
- Olivia Lubarsky, Mental Health America
- Deborah Son, National Association of Social Workers - California Chapter
- Utaka Springing, Native American Health Center
- Rayshell Chambers & Rashawn Morris, Painted Brain
- Stacie Hiramoto, Racial and Ethnic Mental Health Disparities Coalition
- Josefina Alvarado Mena, Safe Passages

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- Pamela Price, The Balm In Gilead, Inc.
- Travis Meade, The Confess Project
- Nakeya Fields & Imani Bradley, Therapeutic Play Foundation
- Alfred Rowlett, Turning Point Community Programs
- Keris Myrick, Unapologetically Black Unicorns & Painted Brain Consultant
- Sharmelle Parker, Victor Community Support Services
- Janine Bera, WellSpace Health

The Community Health Equity Alliance will host a series of quarterly solution-focused convenings with a goal of creating a framework for how our system of care can be more attuned to prevention and early intervention strategies as well as assist Black Americans in navigating the public mental health system.