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**Mayor Steve Benjamin and Former South Bend, Indiana Mayor Pete Buttigieg Co-Chair National Pandemic Resilience Working Group to Develop Strategies for States & Local Municipalities to Contain Spread of COVID-19**

*The Pandemic Resilience Working Group for America’s Mayors, Sponsored by the*

*COVID-19 Study Group at the Edmond J. Safra Center for Ethics at Harvard University*

 *released a national strategic plan to test, trace and isolate COVID-19 infections*

 *with a pandemic goal of attaining near zero new case levels.*

COLUMBIA S.C. – To help cut through the noise and sometimes conflicting advice regarding the COVID-19 pandemic, and to assist states and municipalities with implementing best strategies to localize efforts to attain near zero levels of viral spread, Columbia Mayor Steve Benjamin and former South Bend Mayor Pete Buttigieg co-chair the Pandemic Resilience Working Group for America’s Mayors, organized by the COVID-19 Study Group at the Edmond J. Safra Center for Ethics at Harvard University.

The effort included contributing to the COVID-19 suppression work of a network of national research, policy and public health experts convened by Harvard’s Global Health Institute and Edmond J. Safra Center for Ethics, which today launched a Key Metrics For COVID Suppression framework that provides clear, accessible guidance to policy makers and the public on how to target and suppress COVID-19 more effectively across the nation.

“Coronavirus suppression methods through testing, tracing and supported isolation efforts are not one size fits all. Different metro areas and communities have different levels of COVID prevalence and thus different testing and tracing needs,” said Danielle Allen, Director of Harvard University’s Edmond J. Safra Center for Ethics. “As co-chair of the nation-wide Pandemic Resilience Mayors Working Group, the insight of Mayor Benjamin and other mayors have been crucial in crafting a national coronavirus response strategy based on local needs."

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The new COVID suppression framework brings clarity to metrics that help communities determine the severity of the outbreak they are responding to. A new color-coded COVID Risk Level map shows if a county or state is categorized at green, yellow, orange or red risk levels, based on their number of new daily cases. The framework then delivers broad guidance on the intensity of control efforts needed based on these localized COVID risk levels. It offers key performance indicators for testing and contact tracing across all risk levels, as a backbone for specific suppression efforts.

“As co-chair of this national pandemic suppression effort, I have access to the results-driven pandemic response insights of mayors from across the country, which then informs our efforts to contain the viral spread across the Midlands,” said Mayor Steve Benjamin. “Mayors across the country know the road to pandemic recovery runs straight through our American cities. Our nationwide efforts show there is no red way or blue way to defeat the #COVID19 pandemic in our country—only red, white & blue as an encompassing American effort.”

The framework also allows for a breadth of options for what to do beyond TTSI (testing, tracing and supported isolation) when jurisdictions are at yellow and orange levels. Public officials need to make strategic decisions suitable to their context. Once a community reaches the red risk level, stay-at-home orders become necessary again. The framework also draws attention to the need to focus on suppression at every risk level.

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