FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
July 14, 2021

ASPPH Calls for Nation’s Elected Leaders to Unite in Support of Community Vaccination Efforts

State, local, tribal, and territorial health officials have a long and successful history of engaging with their communities on important public health issues. Community outreach - including door to door efforts - has long been an important and accepted function of public health agencies. Public health work in communities requires dedicated staff, often staff who are from the community and who can provide direct assistance at a household level, whether in delivering vaccines, or in establishing conditions that support health. Public health workers, especially those who are working in communities, are at risk for violence and need to be supported to assure their safety. While concerns (and even political disagreements) about vaccinations can and should be openly discussed, it is not appropriate to misinform the public about the role of public health workers and it is dangerous to misinform in ways that foster hate. Recently in the US some political statements have incorrectly characterized such community health efforts as a nefarious government effort that could lead to the confiscation of firearms and religious texts. Such misrepresentations are an affront to and endanger our dedicated and underappreciated public health workers and are a disservice to those who will benefit from vaccination efforts. There are many reasons people may not be fully vaccinated against COVID-19; making sure that access to the vaccine and factual education are not barriers is a vital public service and responsibility, which should be encouraged by all, regardless of political allegiance. Now more than ever, given the inequity in vaccine uptake in the US and the rising rates of the COVID delta variant in many regions, the Association of Schools and Programs of Public Health strongly supports community outreach efforts promoting COVID-19 vaccinations and calls on the nation’s elected leaders to unite to encourage and support such initiatives.

The Association of Schools and Programs of Public Health (ASPPH) is a 501c3 membership organization located in Washington, DC. ASPPH’s mission is to strengthen the capacity of our 132 member schools and programs by advancing leadership, excellence, and collaboration for academic public health. Our members are CEPH-accredited schools and programs of public health as well as schools and programs in applicant status for CEPH-accreditation.

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