

STATE of TEXAS
HOUSE of REPRESENTATIVES



GARNET F. COLEMAN
STATE REPRESENTATIVE

April 9, 2020

Dr. John William Hellerstedt, MD
Texas Department of State Health Services
1100 West 49th Street
Austin, Texas 78756-3199

Dear Dr. Hellerstedt,

Thank you for your efforts to make Texas a healthier state for all Texans, especially during this trying time as we work to confront the COVID-19 pandemic. For every one of my 28 years in the legislature, public health has always been a priority that is central to my work in both the Capitol and my community.

In 2001, I authored HB 757, legislation that created the state's Health Disparities Task Force. Recently, the UTHealth School of Public Health developed models that indicate that communities of color will likely bear the brunt of the Covid-19 pandemic in Houston, Dallas, Austin and San Antonio. This week, as racial and ethnic data from those Texas cities and other major cities around the country is being released, both the rate of COVID-19 infection and the rate of COVID-19 deaths is clearly affecting people of color disproportionately, and especially in the Black community.

I'm writing to request DSHS that make every effort possible to collect any and all data related to COVID-19 by race and ethnicity, including infection rates, hospitalization rates, ICU rates, death rates and other relevant data. We know all too well that informed planning needed to win the fight against COVID-19, and the next public health crisis, requires comprehensive, accurate data.

Please feel free to contact me to discuss this important matter at your convenience.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Garnet F. Coleman".

Garnet F. Coleman
State Representative--District 147