



Nepali Academics in America (NACA)

**PRESS RELEASE ON THE COVID-19 CRISIS IN NEPAL**

May 20, 2021

As members of an association of academics of Nepali origin in the United States, we feel the pain and suffering the COVID-19 pandemic has caused to our loved ones back in Nepal. Reported statistics on the rates of test positivity, infection, and mortality suggest that the situation is extremely dire. The current trajectory places Nepal at the highest level of infections in South Asia. The situation is even worse in rural areas in the country where medical facilities are very limited.

Nepal is severely ill-equipped to bear the brunt of the pandemic. Just when we thought the pandemic was inching closer to an end in many countries, Nepal is getting the wrath of another and yet more vicious wave of COVID-19. The raging infection and hospitalization have inundated the already weak, under-resourced, and mismanaged medical apparatus, forcing people with terminal and other severe illnesses to deprive of health care and even lose lives.

As a group dedicated to educating and informing the public and policymakers, we feel that it is our responsibility to help Nepal and any other organization or initiative combat the pandemic. Our members are experts in many areas, including public health, medicine, and biomedical and behavioral health sciences. We stand united and prepared to provide any technical support needed to make evidence-based decisions and logistical support. We ask every member of NACA and other organizations of the Nepali diaspora community to make all possible attempts to educate and advocate on behalf of Nepal and Nepalis at this critical juncture.

The pandemic in Nepal has affected the health, welfare, and productivity of the entire community of the Nepali diaspora and academics in the U.S. We, therefore, plead with vaccine-surplus or vaccine-producing countries to provide free COVID-19 vaccines to Nepal urgently. Furthermore, we urge the Biden Administration to allocate a part of its growing vaccine surplus for Nepal specifically. Not only is providing vaccines to an underdeveloped country like Nepal a moral obligation, but the global reach of this highly contagious disease will never fade until vaccines are mobilized at a truly global scale.

*Established in 2020, Nepali Academics in America (NACA) is a non-profit professional association of academics of Nepali origin in the United States with close to 100 members. NACA members representing academia, government, industry, and nonprofit organizations engage in education, research, and outreach activities in the United States, Nepal, and globally.*