

Dear Colleague,

Our country is in crisis. The COVID-19 pandemic has dramatized grave deficiencies and inequities in our socioeconomic system. We are at a crossroads; we must choose a new path. This crisis has provided an opportunity for needed, overdue large system change. **We urgently ask for your personal engagement! Our group is, “Saving Lives Campaign with Cuba”**

Our own U.S. inadequate response to COVID 19 has unnecessarily damaged people and overwhelmed our profit-driven and fragmented health care system beyond its capacity. Cuba’s experience and resources in dealing with Ebola and prior pandemics with the cutting edge solutions they have, and are developing, can only help us. The punishing U.S. blockade of Cuba keeps us from benefiting from, and with, them.

We seek your help to bring the benefits of the Cuban experience to the United States. **We have four concrete proposals to promote the changes needed to achieve this goal:**

- **First**, we’re asking that **you join by signing on, the international campaign to nominate Cuba’s health personnel working all over the world for a Nobel Peace Prize.** During this pandemic, Cuba has responded to requests of medical assistance from 31 countries on every continent. More than 2,000 Cuban health care workers (doctors, nurses, and public health specialists), integrated into the **“Henry Reeve Medical Brigades,”** are working in those countries to treat the sick and contain the COVID-19 pandemic. They are a unique and stellar example of international cooperation and solidarity, all the more amazing coming from a developing, small, blockaded island in the Caribbean. The Cubans know better than anyone that this pandemic will only be defeated with international scientific cooperation and solidarity led by a supreme sense of humanity. We are requesting your support by signing a petition to the Nobel Peace Prize Committee to **nominate the Cuban Henry Reeve International Medical Brigade** for the next award. Please click here to add your name: <https://www.cubanobel.org>.

- **Second, help us bring Cuban health personnel and medications to the U.S.** In Cuba the virus has been contained and severe illness and death limited through the active participation of the entire population in activities defined by a highly competent and organized health care system, and the use of their innovative treatments. We need to pressure our government to collaborate with Cuba in medicine and health, even by providing direct assistance in our cities and other underserved areas such as Native American reservations, where appropriate. Join our Saving Lives Campaign to expand medical and scientific collaboration between the U.S. and Cuba at <http://savinglives.us-cubanormalization.org/>.

- **Third**, for decades, Cuba has granted free medical education at the Latin American School of Medicine (ELAM) in Havana to students from all over the world. For U.S. students, this special program requires a commitment that graduates return to our country and work in a medically underserved community. To date, there are 196 U.S. graduates from the ELAM, with about 70 more at different stages of the training. These graduates bring with them the Cuban commitment to accessible prevention based healthcare.

We ask you to spread the word in the search for potential, qualified candidates, students from

economically deprived and communities of color, for this incredible 7 year, free, ELAM training opportunity. They will always be welcome to apply. You can find more information by contacting the Interreligious Foundation for Community Organization (IFCO)/Pastors for Peace at <https://ifconews.org/medical-school/request-an-application-to-the-elam/>

• **Finally**, for more than 60 years, our government has placed brutal economic and travel sanctions on Cuba. These restrictions include preventing shipments of medicines and medical supplies necessary to fight the COVID-19 pandemic, as well as other diseases and health conditions. **We urge you to support ending all economic and travel sanctions against Cuba, help efforts to pass anti-blockade resolutions in your city, and pressure your elected representatives to support Congressional action to end the blockade.** The situation in the United States is inching us toward a moral reckoning. We “can’t let this opportunity go to waste.” As a dedicated activist, help correct our decades-long persecution of the Cuban people and economy. Support their heroism and exceptional support for underserved peoples around the world.

These 4 appropriate and principled actions will help us participate in saving lives at home and abroad, while building a better relationship between our two countries.

In solidarity,

David McLanahan, MD, Bill Bronston, MD, & Bob Schwartz

on behalf of the **Saving Lives Campaign**