

Second Annual Civic Health Month Launches August 1

More than 200 Organizations Join Nationwide Effort to Magnify Role of Health Care in Civic Engagement, Healthy Communities

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[/EINPresswire.com/](https://www.einpresswire.com/) -- Amid a national

landscape of 1,000+ bills seeking to

reshape voter access, the relationship

between health care, healthy

communities and civic engagement has

never been clearer. While healthcare organizations navigated a pandemic cast against a

backdrop of hotly contested national elections in 2020, their message this year is that 2021 state

and local elections merit just as much focus.



We can create a healthier and more inclusive democracy that gives our most vulnerable patients a seat at the table. Healthcare providers cannot do it alone. But without providers, it cannot be done."

Alister Martin, Founder and Executive Director of Vot-ER



Civic Health Month launches August 1, 2021.

[Building on successful efforts](#) during Civic Health Month 2020, the [coalition of 200+ partners](#) is now working to elevate the importance of state and local elections, which have consistently low turnout but deeply impact policies that shape community health. Civic Health Month partners will take action this August to empower patients, providers, and staff to participate in upcoming elections by using Healthy Democracy Kits, displaying posters, and/or hosting voter registration drives, among other activities. More than 60 medical schools will participate in the Healthy Democracy Campaign, a nationwide voter registration competition.

"Our healthcare system has long functioned as a repair shop: we tend to focus most of our attention on fixing what's gone wrong, rather than on the social conditions driving negative health outcomes. Both matter. Civic engagement is a powerful avenue for healthcare providers and patients to play a role in addressing root causes by advocating for the needs of our communities with our votes," said Dr. Donald Berwick, President Emeritus, Senior Fellow at the Institute for Healthcare Improvement, and former Administrator of the Centers for Medicare and

Medicaid Services.

The coalition includes prominent, long-established organizations like the League of Women Voters, the American Nurses Association, and the American Academy of Pediatrics.

“While the COVID-19 pandemic threatened to curb healthy participation in the 2020 election, it instead provided a shot in the arm for our democracy by emphasizing the

importance of maintaining access to the ballot box. Health care organizations and providers played a critical role in 2020 turnout by making sure patients had safe plans to vote, and we are continuing our efforts to integrate voter registration into the healthcare setting in order to protect the civic health of our patients and colleagues in the long term,” said Dr. Deborah Turner, board President, League of Women Voters of the United States.



Today, healthcare providers are integrating voter registration processes into their everyday systems. “With the National Voter Registration Act, we saw widespread incorporation of voter registration into DMV processes like driver’s license renewal. Now in a medical setting, we can similarly incorporate voter registration prompts into different parts of a patient's care. They might encounter a poster in the waiting room, be asked if they are registered by a provider, or receive voting information in their discharge papers. These interventions create a salient moment of choice for a patient to register to vote. Because the information is coming from a trusted source, it can carry more weight and is more likely to elicit follow-through,” said Omar Parbhoo, Vice President at ideas42.

During the pandemic, trust in healthcare providers soared. Much like DMVs – where driver’s license renewal includes voter registration – [the healthcare sector can be an effective voter access touchpoint](#). “We can create a healthier and more inclusive democracy that gives our most vulnerable patients a seat at the table. Healthcare providers cannot do it alone. But without healthcare providers, it cannot be done,” said Dr. Alister Martin, Founder and Executive Director of Vot-ER.

There are several ways for organizations, communities, and individuals to participate in Civic Health Month:

Sign up to be a Civic Health Month Partner:

Health and civic engagement organizations can join the coalition by committing to take one action during the month of August to promote healthcare-based voter registration efforts. Sign up at <https://www.civichealthmonth.org/join-us>.

Register to attend the Civic Health Month Launch Event:

On August 2 at 12:30 EDT, leaders in the field of civic health will share their experiences amplifying the civic voice in health care and tools for success. Register at

<https://www.civichealthmonth.org/launch>.

Order Vot-ER's free Healthy Democracy Kit or order custom Kits for your institution:

Individuals or institutions can order lanyards and badge backers that display a QR code and text-in number which connect patients to a digital platform for voter registration and mail-in ballot requests at <https://vot-er.org/healthy-democracy-kit/>.

Participate in the Healthy Democracy Campaign:

Medical students and schools can sign up to compete in the Campaign and receive recognition for their commitment to civic engagement and health equity at <https://vot-er.org/campaign21/>.

Please visit <https://www.civichealthmonth.org/> and <https://vot-er.org/> for additional information.

Nonpartisan Statement: Civic Health Month is a nonpartisan effort. Our goal is to increase civic engagement among all patients and providers. Civic Health Month does not support or oppose any political party or candidate for office, nor do we take any positions on specific policy issues. Any and all views expressed by individuals or partners are their own and do not constitute the views or position of Civic Health Month as a whole.

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