**Sample Sign-on Letter for a Coalition**

Dear AAA (insert name of policy/decision maker):

The undersigned are leaders of several of the largest and most influential civil society patient- based advocacy organizations in BBB (insert country). We are writing to encourage you to help make a stand for public health by fighting health misinformation.

Health misinformation in Covid-19 is harmful. First, unproven products can cause harm when ingested. For patients with weakened immune systems, this can be deadly. Second, false promises can lead to unhealthy behaviors when consumers think they are protected, but in fact remain at risk. Third, the promotion of unproven products can lead to irrational hoarding of certain medicines and supplies, which in turn means non Covid-19 patients who rely on these products have less to access. Hoarding of hydroxychloroquine has caused access problems for patients with lupus or rheumatoid arthritis, for example.

Fourth, health misinformation crowds-out good information. The investments our government has made to produce and disseminate quality information are less effective when there are alternative explanations or false cures easily available and that quickly spread. Fifth, bad information slowly erodes public trust in science and medicine. This lack of confidence can then extend to doubts about our health system and health governance leadership. Strengthening our health system to be better for all citizens becomes a more difficult challenge without public trust.

All of this said, we are also concerned with overzealous enforcement by authorities when misinformation is identified as such. While we understand the need to maintain public order, bad information is usually not criminal in nature and should not be penalized as such. Overreach in this regard will only stifle freedom of expression and the free flow of information. Instead, we believe the better strategy is to refute or rebut misinformation with facts and evidence as appropriate.

As patient advocacy leaders, we help meet the needs of non Covid-19 patients suffering from life- threatening diseases and requiring ongoing treatment and care during the pandemic. It is critically important that health misinformation not continue to undercut our efforts with false promises, unproven treatments, and dangerous propositions. Patients are already at a disadvantage. It is equally important to maintain an open environment for freedom of speech.

Instead, we encourage you to work with civil society patient advocates to find solutions. For example, we can together build needed mechanisms to identify harmful information and react quickly to name it as such and correct the record. Our community networks are vast and can spread good information quickly. We stand together to combat misinformation and hope that you too will stand with us.

If you agree, our organizations are at your disposal for further discussion and consideration. Please contact CCC (insert main contact name) via email (insert email) or phone (insert phone).

Sincerely,

(Name)
(Organization)
(Signature)

...repeat number of signatories as necessary...