

September 6, 2018

The Honorable Tom Cole, Chairman
Labor, Health and Human Services, Education
and Related Agencies Subcommittee
Committee on Appropriations
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Rosa DeLauro, Ranking Member
Labor, Health and Human Services, Education and
Related Agencies Subcommittee
Committee on Appropriations
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Roy Blunt, Chairman
Labor, Health and Human Services, Education
and Related Agencies Subcommittee
Committee on Appropriations
U.S. Senate
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Patty Murray, Ranking Member
Labor, Health and Human Services, Education and
Related Agencies Subcommittee
Committee on Appropriations
U.S. Senate
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Chairmen Cole and Blunt and Ranking Members DeLauro and Murray:

We, the undersigned public and environmental health organizations, write to you to express our support for increased funding for Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) National Center for Environmental Health (NCEH) in the FY 2019 Labor, HHS, Education appropriations bill. We thank you for the important increased funding provided to NCEH in the FY 2018 omnibus spending bill and we urge you to build upon these increases as you work to finalize the FY 2019 bill. We are however, deeply disappointed that once again, the current House bill proposes the complete elimination of the Climate and Health Program and we urge you to ensure that funding for this program be included in any final FY 2019 spending bill.

As Congress continues to move forward with the appropriations process for FY 2019, we urge you to restore the proposed cuts in the House bill and to provide at least \$217 million to NCEH to ensure all of its programs are adequately funded. This funding will help ensure that NCEH can work to strengthen and expand its programs including:

- Improving environmental health surveillance by expanding the National Environmental Public Health Tracking Network to a true nationwide network. Currently, the program provides funding to only 26 state and local health departments.
- Expanding critically underfunded childhood lead poisoning prevention activities by increasing funding for CDC's Childhood Lead Poisoning Prevention Program which will allow CDC to provide grants to all 50 states for surveillance to determine the extent of childhood lead poisoning, as well as educate the public and healthcare providers about lead poisoning, and ensure that lead-exposed children received needed medical and environmental follow-up services.
- Expanding the National Biomonitoring Network by providing additional resources to expand the number of states that can undertake state population-based biomonitoring

surveillance. The public continues to express concern about exposure to chemicals in their everyday lives and during environmental emergencies yet we are often unable to provide data about these exposures at the state and local level.

- Strengthening and expanding funding to additional states under the National Asthma Control Program that tracks asthma prevalence, promotes asthma control and prevention and builds capacity in state programs. Currently, CDC only has resources to fund 25 states. It is estimated that 24 million Americans currently have asthma, including more than 6 million children. The program has been highly effective: the rate of asthma has increased, yet asthma mortality and morbidity rates have decreased while disparities in rates amongst racial and ethnic minorities persist.
- Maintaining funding of at least \$10 million for the Climate and Health Program which is providing 16 states, two cities, three tribes and three territories (covering 50 percent of the U.S. population) with funding to help diagnose and prepare for the serious adverse health impacts of a changing climate including extreme heat, more severe storms, floods, droughts, increases in air pollution and pollen and the spread of infectious and vector-borne diseases – such as Lyme disease and dengue fever.

Increasing our investments in environmental health prevention activities today will help reduce illness, disease, injury and even death. We cannot hope to use our health care system alone to tackle the dangerous problems – dirty air and water, toxic substances, lead poisoning, extreme weather and many other environmental hazards – that occur outside the walls of the clinic. However, adequate investments today and into the future in core environmental health activities can be a critical down payment on health, productivity, and happiness of countless Americans. We thank you for considering this recommendation and hope to continue to work with you and your staff as deliberations over FY 2019 appropriations continue.

Sincerely,

American Public Health Association
Trust for America's Health
Allergy and Asthma Network
Alliance of Nurses for Healthy Environments
American Academy of Pediatrics
American College of Clinical Pharmacy
American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists
American College of Preventive Medicine
American Lung Association
American Psychological Association
The Arc of the United States
Association of Maternal and Child Health Programs
Association of Public Health Laboratories
Association of Schools and Programs of Public Health
Association of State and Territorial Health Officials
Asthma and Allergy Foundation of America

Campbell Institute
Children's Environmental Health Network
Commissioned Officers Association of the U.S. Public Health Service, Inc.
Council of State and Territorial Epidemiologists
Green and Healthy Homes Initiative
Health Care Without Harm
Health Resources in Action
Iowa Public Health Association
March of Dimes
National Association of County and City Health Officials
National Center for Healthy Housing
National Environmental Health Association
National Recreation and Park Association
Northeast South Dakota Area Health Education Center
Physicians for Social Responsibility
Prevention Institute
Public Health Foundation
Public Health Institute
Public Health Institute of Western Massachusetts
Regional Asthma Management and Prevention
RiverStone Health