

The Honorable Tammy Baldwin  
Chair  
Committee on Appropriations Subcommittee on Labor, Health and Human Services, Education,  
and Related Agencies  
U.S. Senate  
Washington, DC 20510

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

May 14, 2024

Dear Chair Baldwin and Ranking Member Capito:

As you and your colleagues begin work on the Fiscal Year (FY) 2025 Labor-Health and Human Services-Education appropriations bill, the undersigned 141 organizations **respectfully request that you fully fund the Public Health Workforce Loan Repayment Program at its \$100 million authorization level and provide \$50 million to launch the Bio-Preparedness Workforce Pilot Program** at the Health Resources and Services Administration.

**The state and local public health workforce is the backbone of the nation’s governmental public health system but is facing a crisis.** Between 2008 and 2019, state and local health departments lost 15 percent of essential staff, and 80,000 more full-time equivalents – an increase of nearly 80 percent – are needed to provide a minimum package of public health services.<sup>1</sup> New data on local health departments show that the workforce grew after an influx of funding during the pandemic, with an increase over 150% in temporary contract workers, but this increase is short-lived without additional funding. While all health departments need additional staff, one of the most acute needs is in small local health departments which often serve rural communities. Without sufficient funding to recruit and retain staff, health departments may not be able to carry out essential services like screening and treatment for both chronic and communicable diseases; maternal and child health services; epidemiology and surveillance; routine immunizations; primary prevention services; and regulation, inspection, or licensing. Local and state health departments are also our nation’s first line response to public health emergencies. An underinvestment in state and local public health workforce leaves our communities under-prepared to respond to emergencies, including infectious disease outbreaks, environmental hazards, and weather-related events.

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<sup>1</sup> <https://debeaumont.org/staffing-up/>

**Meanwhile, the infectious disease (ID) and HIV workforce that works in collaboration with public health is also in crisis.** Workforce shortages coupled with lower pay and a lack of financial incentives for recruitment and retention persist among ID and HIV health care professionals, including ID physicians, clinical microbiologists, nurses, pharmacists, physician assistants, infection preventionists, and dentists. In 2022, 80 percent of U.S. counties lacked an ID physician, and just over half of ID physician training programs filled, compared to most other physician specialties which filled nearly all their programs. A quarter of health care facilities have reported a vacant infection preventionist position and a 2019 survey showed a vacancy rate for clinical microbiologists of over 10 percent. Communities without ID health care professionals will be less equipped to respond to threats like antimicrobial resistance, health care associated infections, sepsis, and infectious diseases associated with the opioid epidemic, and less able to advance federal initiatives to End the HIV Epidemic and eliminate viral hepatitis.

Our organizations are grateful to Congress for recognizing the challenges facing these vital workforces and including Section 2221 of the Consolidated Appropriations Act of 2023 bipartisan legislation authorizing both the Public Health Workforce Loan Repayment Program and the Bio-Preparedness Workforce Pilot Program. These programs will provide needed financial incentives to bring public health and ID professionals into settings where they are crucially needed. We are hopeful that your Subcommittee will build on this important progress and provide funding for these programs in FY 2025.

**As your Subcommittee makes funding decisions for FY 2025, we urge you to fully fund the Public Health Workforce Loan Repayment Program at its \$100 million authorization level and provide \$50 million to launch the Bio-Preparedness Workforce Pilot Program.**

Investing in these bipartisan programs would promote the recruitment and retention of as many as 2,000 public health professionals at local, state, and Tribal public health agencies across the country, and as many as 1,000 ID and HIV health care professionals in rural and urban health professional shortage areas, medically underserved communities, or federal facilities by offering loan repayment in exchange for three-year service commitments. These commonsense incentives will help ensure our public health and ID workforces grow sufficiently to keep our communities safe and healthy in the years to come.

Sincerely,

National Association of County and City Health Officials  
Infectious Diseases Society of America  
Act Now End AIDS (ANEA) Coalition  
ADAP Advocacy  
AIDS Action Baltimore  
AIDS Alabama  
AIDS Alliance for Women, Infants, Children, Youth & Families  
AIDS Foundation Chicago  
AIDS United

American Academy of HIV Medicine  
American College of Clinical Pharmacy  
American Geriatrics Society  
American Public Health Association  
American Society for Microbiology  
APLA Health  
Association for Diagnostics & Laboratory Medicine  
Association for Molecular Pathology  
Association for Professionals in Infection Control and Epidemiology  
Association of Nurses in AIDS Care (ANAC)  
Association of Public Health Laboratories  
Association of Schools and Programs of Public Health  
Association of State and Territorial Health Officials  
AVAC  
Big Cities Health Coalition  
Boone County Health Department  
CAEAR Coalition  
Cares of Southwest Michigan  
Cascade AIDS Project  
CenterLink: The Community of LGBTQ Centers  
Clemson Rural Health  
Cleveland Clinic  
Coalition of National Health Education Organizations  
Colorado Association of Local Public Health Officials  
Columbia University, Mailman School of Public Health  
Community Access National Network  
Cook County Department of Public Health  
Council of State and Territorial Epidemiologists  
Cystic Fibrosis Foundation  
Delaware HIV Consortium  
Duke Health  
Embrace Health, Inc  
Equality California  
Eta Sigma Gamma  
Fenway Health  
Five Horizons Health Services  
Foothills Health District  
Georgia AIDS Coalition  
Gerontological Society of America  
GLMA: Health Professionals Advancing LGBTQ+ Equality  
Global Network of Black People working in HIV  
GMHC  
Grady Health System - Ponce De Leon Center

Hawai'i Health & Harm Reduction Center  
HealthHIV  
Hennepin County, Minnesota  
HIV Dental Alliance  
HIV Medicine Association  
HIV/AIDS Alliance of Michigan  
HIV+Hepatitis Policy Institute  
Hope and Help Center of Central Florida, Inc.  
Housing Works, Inc.  
Howard Brown Health  
Human Rights Campaign  
Infectious Diseases Associates  
International Association of Providers of AIDS Care  
Iris House Inc  
Kentucky Health Departments Association  
Kern County Hospital Authority  
Latino Commission on AIDS, Inc.  
Legacy Community Health  
Linn-Benton Community College  
Los Angeles LGBT Center  
Maine Medical Association  
Maine Osteopathic Association  
Maryland Association of County Health Officers  
Massachusetts Health Officers Association  
MercyOne Medical Center, DesMoines  
NASTAD  
National Alliance for HIV Education and Workforce Development (NAHEWD)  
National Alliance of Public Health Students & Alums (NAPHSAs)  
National Association of Nurse Practitioners in Women's Health  
National Coalition for LGBTQ Health  
National Coalition of STD Directors  
National Consumers League  
National Environmental Health Association  
National Network of Public Health Institutes  
National Pharmaceutical Association (NPhA)  
National Rural Health Association  
National Working Positive Coalition  
New Jersey Association of County and City Health Officials (NJACCHO)  
New Jersey Environmental Health Association  
NMAC  
North Carolina Association of Local Health Directors  
North Carolina Public Health Association  
NTM Info & Research

Oregon Coalition of Local Health Officials  
Oregon State University  
PA Education Association  
Pediatric Infectious Diseases Society  
Peggy Lillis Foundation  
PlusInc  
Positive Impact Health Centers  
PrEP4All  
Public Health Accreditation Board  
Ryan White Medical Providers Coalition  
Saint Francis University Public Health  
San Francisco AIDS Foundation  
San Francisco Community Health Center  
School-Based Health Alliance  
Sepsis Alliance  
Society for Healthcare Epidemiology of America  
Society for Public Health Education  
Society of Infectious Diseases Pharmacists  
Stuart B Levy Center for Integrated Management of Antimicrobial Resistance at Tufts  
Student National Pharmaceutical Association (SNPhA)  
Sutter Health  
Texas Association of City & County Health Officials  
The AIDS Institute  
The Renewell Foundation  
The Reunion Project  
THRIVE SS, Inc  
Treatment Action Group  
Trinity Health  
Trust for America's Health  
Tucson Interfaith HIV/AIDS Network (TIHAN)  
U.S. People Living with HIV Caucus  
UAF Legacy Health  
UMass Amherst, School of Public Health and Health Sciences  
University of Illinois Health  
University of Washington School of Medicine  
Valley AIDS Council  
Vermont Public Health Association  
Vivent Health  
Warren-Vance Community Health Center  
Washington State Association of Local Public Health Officials  
Washington State Hospital Association  
Washington State Public Health Association  
Wellness Equity Alliance

West Michigan Infectious Diseases Consultants  
Whitman-Walker Institute  
Wisconsin Association of Local Health Departments and Boards