

January 23, 2012

The Honorable Barack Obama
The White House
Washington, DC 20500

Dear President Obama:

The 105 undersigned local, state, and national organizations dedicated to the health and welfare of our nation's young people ask that you restore Fiscal Year (FY) 2012 funding for the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's (CDC's) Division of Adolescent and School Health (DASH) and increase funding for the Division in your FY 2013 budget request.

When FY 2012 funding was finalized in late-December, included was a devastating \$10 million cut to DASH. While \$10 million is not necessarily a large sum in the context of the federal budget, this cut reflects a drastic 25% reduction to the \$40 million in funding DASH received in FY 2011. We request that you work with the CDC to fill the gap in funding lost to DASH through the FY12 appropriations process, while maintaining other HIV and STD funding levels.

In addition, DASH has not received an increase to their budget in over ten years. In these tough economic times, between inflation and state budget cuts, DASH HIV coordinators in the states are already doing more with less. We also request that, as you work with the CDC to restore lost FY12 funding, you increase funding for DASH at the community-requested level of \$50 million in your FY 2013 budget request.

This past World AIDS Day, you boldly announced your Administration's commitment "to ending the AIDS pandemic once and for all" and pledged to fight HIV "today, tomorrow, every day until we get to zero." As a nation, we will not be able to achieve the commendable goal of zero new infections without stemming the tide of new infections among young people. Schools play a critical role in promoting the health and safety of young people by helping them establish lifelong healthy behavior patterns. Each day presents our nation's schools with the opportunity to reach 56 million students, providing them with information about health and giving them the opportunity to practice the skills that promote healthy behaviors. DASH is the vehicle to reach these 56 million students with messages of HIV and STD prevention so we can achieve an AIDS-free generation.

Created as a response to the HIV epidemic, for over twenty years DASH has effectively worked with schools across the country to build the infrastructure necessary to provide a coordinated approach to school health education—including HIV/STD-prevention and sex education. Through DASH-funded HIV coordinator staff, this integrated approach supplies essential training, resources and technical assistance to teachers working with 71 state, local, tribal and territorial education agencies. DASH funding helps to provide educators the tools they need to instruct students in preventing sexually transmitted infections, including HIV, and unintended pregnancy.

These coordinators make significant connections with other state and local health prevention groups, gain entry to schools for other important national health prevention initiatives, and provide expertise in obtaining additional federal and local funding. If nothing is done, this crippling 25% cut will greatly diminish the capacity of education agencies to deliver these crucial services.

Young people make up one third of new HIV infections. Data released just last August from the CDC shows that the only age group where HIV incidence is increasing is young people ages 13–29, driven by an increase in new infections among young men who have sex with men. This is a time when we should be increasing our HIV prevention work with young people, not drastically cutting funding and dismantling the programs that work on the ground where young people are: in our nation’s schools.

We thank you for your continued leadership and commitment to ending the HIV/AIDS epidemic, and look forward to working with you and your Administration in the coming year on the FY 2013 budget and recommitting necessary resources to HIV-prevention education for youth. If you have any questions, please contact Sarah Audelo at Advocates for Youth (sarah@advocatesforyouth.org), Jen Heitel Yakush at SIECUS (jyakush@siecus.org), or Stephanie Arnold Pang at National Coalition of STD Directors (sarnold@ncsddc.org).

Sincerely,

Advocates for Youth
AIDS Action Baltimore (Baltimore, MD)
AIDS Alabama (Alabama)
AIDS Alliance for Children, Youth & Families
AIDS Foundation of Chicago (Chicago, IL)
The AIDS Institute (Washington, DC and Tampa, FL)
AIDS Project Los Angeles (Los Angeles, CA)
AIDS Project of Central Iowa (Des Moines, IA)
The AIDS Taskforce of Greater Cleveland (Cleveland, OH)
AIDS United
American Academy of Pediatrics
American Journal of Sexuality Education
American Medical Student Association (AMSA)
American School Health Association
American Social Health Association
Answer
Asian & Pacific Islander Wellness Center (San Francisco, CA)
Asian Communities for Reproductive Justice (Oakland, CA)
Association of Reproductive Health Professionals (ARHP)
Austin Harm Reduction Coalition (Austin, TX)
Baldwin Family Health Care (Baldwin, MI)
Black Women’s Health Imperative
Boulder Valley Women’s Health Center (Boulder, CO)
Business and Professional Women/Arizona
Cascade AIDS Project (Portland, OR)
The Center for Family Life Education
Center for Health and Learning (Brattleboro, VT)
CenterLink: The Community of LGBT Centers
Chicago House and Social Service Agency (Chicago, IL)

Chicago Recovery Alliance (Chicago, IL)
Colorado AIDS Project (Colorado)
Community HIV/Hepatitis Advocates of Iowa Network (CHAIN) (Iowa)
Comprehensive School Health Coordinator's Association (Michigan)
Equality Iowa (Iowa)
Equality Michigan (Michigan)
EyesOpenIowa: Your Connection to Adolescent Sexual Health (Des Moines, IA)
Family Planning Council (Philadelphia, PA)
Feminist Majority Foundation
Gay Men's Health Crisis (New York, NY)
Gay, Lesbian & Straight Education Network (GLSEN)
Gay-Straight Alliance Network
Hastings College PHIVE-O (Peer HIV Education Organization) (Hastings, NE)
Health Services Center (Alabama)
Health4Hire, Inc. (Lansing, MI)
Healthcare Alternative Systems, Inc. (Chicago, IL)
Healthy Fathering Collaborative of Greater Cleveland (Cleveland, OH)
Healthy Teen Network
HiTOPS (Princeton, NJ)
HIV Prevention Justice Alliance
HIV/AIDS Resource Center (Ypsilanti, MI)
Illinois Caucus for Adolescent Health (ICAH) (Chicago, IL)
Indiana Youth Group (Indiana)
International Women's Health Coalition
L.A. Gay & Lesbian Center (Los Angeles, CA)
Lansing Area AIDS Network (Lansing, MI)
Legacy Community Health Services (Houston, TX)
LGBT Humanist Council
Lifelong AIDS Alliance (Seattle, WA)
Madison County Health Department (Anderson, IN)
Michigan Organization on Adolescent Sexual Health (MOASH) (Lansing , MI)
Michigan Positive Action Coalition (MIPOZ) (Detroit, MI)
Minnesota AIDS Project (Minneapolis, MN)
Minnesota Department of Education (Roseville, MN)
National Alliance of State and Territorial AIDS Directors (NASTAD)
National Assembly on School-Based Health Care
National Association of County and City Health Officials (NACCHO)
National Association of People With AIDS (NAPWA)
National Black Leadership Commission on AIDS
The National Campaign to Prevent Teen and Unplanned Pregnancy
National Coalition of STD Directors
National Council of Jewish Women, Inc.

National Council of Jewish Women, New Jersey State Policy Advocacy Network (Elizabeth, NJ)
National Education Association
National Family Planning & Reproductive Health Association
National Latina Health Network
National Latina Institute for Reproductive Health
Nebraska AIDS Project (Omaha, NE)
Nebraska Department of Education
North Carolina Harm Reduction Coalition (Durham, NC)
Our Bodies Ourselves (Cambridge, MA)
Parent Action for Healthy Kids (Michigan)
The People's Network of Baltimore, Inc. (Florida, Georgia, and Maryland)
Physicians for Reproductive Choice and Health
Planned Parenthood Federation of America
Positive Iowans Taking Charge (PITCH) (Des Moines, IA)
Project Inform
Religious Coalition for Reproductive Choice
Religious Coalition for Reproductive Choice of Connecticut, Inc. (Old Greenwich, CT)
Religious Institute
RMC Health
School Community Health Alliance of Michigan (Michigan)
Sexuality Information and Education Council of the United States (SIECUS)
Society for Adolescent Health and Medicine
Society of State Leaders of Health and Physical Education
South Carolina Campaign to Prevention Teen Pregnancy (South Carolina)
Southside HIV Program at the University of Chicago (Chicago, IL)
Teenwise Minnesota (St. Paul, MN)
U.S. Positive Women's Network (PWN)
Union for Reform Judaism
United Church of Christ
University of Pennsylvania – Student Health Service (Philadelphia, PA)
Vermont People with AIDS Coalition (Vermont)
Women of Reform Judaism
Women Organized to Respond to Life-threatening Diseases (WORLD) (Oakland, CA)
Women's Alliance for Theology, Ethics and Ritual (WATER) (Silver Spring, MD)
Women's Information Network (WIN) (Washington, DC)
The Young Women's Project

Cc: Office of Management and Budget
Office of National AIDS Policy
Department of Health and Human Services
Centers for Disease Control and Prevention
Presidents Advisory Council on HIV/AIDS