May 21, 2021

The Honorable Patty Murray Chairwoman Subcommittee on Labor, Health and Human Services, Education and Related Agencies Senate Committee on Appropriations United States Senate Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Rosa DeLauro Chairwoman Subcommittee on Labor, Health and Human Services, Education, and Related Agencies House Committee on Appropriations United States House of Representatives Washington, DC 20515 The Honorable Roy Blunt Ranking Member Subcommittee on Labor, Health and Human Services, Education and Related Agencies Senate Committee on Appropriations United States Senate Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Tom Cole Ranking Member Subcommittee on Labor, Health and Human Services, Education, and Related Agencies House Committee on Appropriations United States House of Representatives Washington, DC 20515

Subject: FY22 CDC Infectious Diseases and the Opioid Epidemic Program Funding Request

Dear Chairwoman Murray, Chairwoman DeLauro, and Ranking Members Blunt and Cole:

The undersigned 229 public health, harm reduction, HIV, hepatitis, criminal justice reform, and community-based organizations urge you to increase critical funding to respond to the dramatic and ongoing overdose crisis by providing \$120 million for the Infectious Diseases and the Opioid Epidemic program at the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) in the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) in the Labor, HHS appropriations bill. Funding increases would support and expand access to overdose prevention and syringe services programs (SSPs) to help stem the dramatically increasing number of overdose deaths. Additionally, we urge you to end the ban on the use of federal funding for syringes.

The United States is experiencing an ongoing drug overdose crisis, with more than 100,000 overdose deaths expected to be counted in 2020 and potentially that many in calendar year 2021. Overdose deaths recorded during 2020 are expected to have increased by more than 40% over the

Overdose deaths recorded during 2020 are expected to have increased by more than 40% over the previous record year of 2019. SSPs effectively help prevent drug overdoses. They have the knowledge, contacts, and ability to reach people who use drugs; they provide naloxone and other overdose prevention resources; and they connect people to medical care and support, including Substance Use Disorder treatment. Congress must provide essential funding to support and expand access to syringe services programs at this critical time when their services are desperately needed to save lives. Approximately half of SSPs are experiencing reduced resources now and/or expect budget cuts as a result of the economic pressures of COVID-19. Additionally, Congress should remove federal restrictions on the use of syringes, which are critical to the functioning of SSPs and effectively help to prevent the spread of infectious diseases.

Overdose deaths have increased more dramatically among Black people and communities of color.

From 2015 to 2018, overdose deaths among African Americans more than doubled (by 2.2 times) and among Hispanic people increased by 1.7 times while increasing among white, non-Hispanic people by 1.3 times. SSPs are effective at distributing naloxone - a drug which can prevent overdose deaths - both to people at risk of overdose as well as to other community members. A study from Massachusetts found a 46% reduction in opioid overdose mortality rates with substantially increased access to naloxone. With

additional resources, SSPs could increase ready access to naloxone and its use, which would help reduce the overdose deaths.

Currently, the nation has insufficient access to SSPs and most people at risk from overdose need significantly increased access to services. According to the North American Syringe Exchange Network (NASEN), there are approximately 400 SSPs operating nationwide. Experts estimate that to sufficiently expand access to SSP programs, the U.S. would require approximately 2,000 programs - 5 times the number in existence now. The requested funding increase could provide a 10% increase to currently operating SSPs to help address funding cuts and shortfalls as well as expand the number of SSPs nationwide by approximately 50 programs. These additional resources are urgently needed to reduce overdose deaths and the spread of costly infectious diseases.

Finally, expanding access to SSPs will reduce health care costs, including for infectious diseases treatment. The rise in injection drug use associated with opioid use disorder over the past decade is largely responsible for the 380% increase in hepatitis C cases and has been the cause of HIV outbreaks in communities across the nation. Hepatitis C treatment can cost more than \$30,000 per person, while HIV treatment can cost upwards of \$560,000 per person. Averting even a small number of cases has the potential to save millions in treatment costs in a single year.

To help the nation respond to this urgent overdose crisis, we urge Congress to provide \$120 million in funding for the Infectious Diseases and the Opioid Epidemic program at CDC/HHS in the LHHS appropriations bill and to remove language banning the use of federal funding for syringes.

Thank you for your time and consideration of this critical request. If you have questions or need additional information, please do not hesitate to contact William McColl, senior consultant with Collier Collective at bmccoll@colliercollective.org. Thank you.

Sincerely,

National Organizations

AIDS United

American Academy of HIV Medicine

American Medical Women's Association

American Society of Addiction Medicine

Association of Prosecuting Attorneys

Black AIDS Institute

CAEAR Coalition

Center for Popular Democracy (CPD)

DanceSafe

Drug Policy Alliance (DPA)

Fast Track Cities Institute

GLMA: Health Professionals Advancing LGBTQ Equality

Harm Reduction Coalition

HealthHIV

Hepatitis C Mentor and Support Group (HCMSG)

HIV + Hepatitis Policy Institute

HIV Medicine Association

International Association of Providers of AIDS Care

John Snow, Inc. (JSI)

Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health

Latino Commission on AIDS

Legal Action Center

NAADAC, The Association for Addiction Professionals

National Association of County and City Health Officials

National Association of State and Territorial AIDS Directors (NASTAD)

National Center for Lesbian Rights

National Coalition for LGBT Health

National Coalition of STD Directors

National Health Care for the Homeless Council

National Viral Hepatitis Roundtable

National Working Positive Coalition

PFLAG National

Positive Women's Network

Prevention Access Campaign

Rural Health Service Providers Network

Stop the Drug War

Students for Sensible Drug Policy

SWOP BEHIND BARS

The AIDS Institute

The Center for HIV Law and Policy

The Well Project

Treatment Action Group

U.S. People Living with HIV Caucus

Union for Reform Judaism

Washington Office on Latin America (WOLA)

Alabama

AIDS Alabama

Five Horizons Health Services

GoodWorks: North Alabama Harm Reduction

Southern AIDS Coalition

The 6:52 Project Foundation

Alaska

Alaskan Aids Assistance Association (Four A's) - Syringe Access Program

Homer Exchange

Arizona

Aunt Ritas Foundation

Phoenix Pride

Southwest Center

Arkansas

Central Arkansas Harm Reduction

California

A New PATH (Parents for Addiction Treatment & Healing)

Any Positive Change Inc.

APLA Health and Wellness

Asian American Drug Abuse Program (AADAP)

Asian Liver Center, Stanford University School of Medicine

Berkeley Copwatch

Bienestar Human Services

Christie's Place

Clary Strategies

Desert AIDS Project (d/b/a DAP Health)

End Hep C SF

Face to Face

Glide Syringe Access Services (SAS)

Harm Reduction Coalition of San Diego County

Harvey Milk LGTBQ Democratic Club

HealthRIGHT 360

HIV Education and Prevention Project of Alameda County

Humboldt Area Center for Harm Reduction

Los Angeles LGBT Center

MCAVHN Care and Prevention Network

Northern Valley Harm Reduction Coalition

Public Safety SLO

Saint James Infirmary

San Francisco AIDS Foundation

San Francisco Department of Public Health

San Francisco Hepatitis C Task Force

SLO Bangers Syringe Exchange and Overdose Prevention Program

The Sidewalk Project

The Spahr Center

Transitions Clinic

Women Organized to Respond to Life-threatening Diseases (WORLD)

Colorado

Harm Reduction Action Center (HRAC) Vivent Health Denver

Connecticut

Alliance for Living Sex Workers and Allies Network - SWAN Yale Program in Addiction Medicine

Delaware

Delaware HIV Services, Inc.

Florida

First Coast Recovery Advocates NEU Health Solutions Inc Saint Augustine Harm Reduction Collective Suncoast Harm Reduction Project

Georgia

Atlanta Harm Reduction Coalition Georgia AIDS Coalition Georgia Equality Georgia Overdose Prevention HIV Dental Alliance Phoenix Transition Program

Hawaii

Hawai'i Health & Harm Reduction Center Hep Free Hawaii

Idaho

Idaho Harm Reduction Project

Illinois

Above and Beyond Family Recovery Center AIDS Foundation Chicago Broken No More Center for Housing & Health Chicago Drug Users' Union Chicago Urban League Jolt Foundation Live4Lali QC Harm Reduction The Perfectly Flawed Foundation The Porchlight Collective SAP

Indiana

A Better Life Brianna's Hope HIV Modernization Movement-Indiana Urban Survivors Union, Indiana

Iowa Harm Reduction Coalition

Kentucky

Kentucky Harm Reduction Coalition

Louisiana

Capitol Area Reentry Program Inc. CrescentCare Women With A Vision

Maine

Amistad Maine Access Points

Maryland

Addiction Connections Resource **Baltimore Harm Reduction Coalition** Charm City Care Connection Maryland Communities United MEDPEARL LLC

National Council on Alcoholism and Drug Dependence (NCADD) - Maryland Chapter Voices of Hope, Inc.

Massachusetts

Fenway Health Health in Justice Action Lab, Northeastern University School of Law New England Users Union

Michigan

Arab Community Center for Economic and Social Services (ACCESS) CARES of Southwest Michigan Community Outreach Prevention and Education Network (COPE Network) Harm Reduction Michigan HIV/AIDS Alliance of Michigan Lansing Area AIDS Network (LAAN) Lansing Syringe Access The Grand Rapids Red Project UNIFIED - HIV Health and Beyond Wellness AIDS Services

Minnesota

A. Reed Holtum Solutions Hope House of St. Croix Valley Southside Harm Reduction Services

Mississippi

Mississippi Harm Reduction Initiative

Missouri

University of Missouri, St. Louis - Missouri Institute of Mental Health

Montana

Open Aid Alliance

Nevada

Harm Reduction Center - Las Vegas (Trac-B Exchange) Southern Nevada Health District

New Hampshire

HIV/HCV Resource Center New Hampshire Harm Reduction Coalition

New Jersey

Hepatitis C Association Hyacinth AIDS Foundation

New Mexico

New Mexico Dept. of Health

New York

BOOM! Health Harm Reduction Center Callen-Lorde Community Health Center Coalition on Positive Health Empowerment

Faith in Harm Reduction

Harm Reduction Caucus at Columbia University School of Social Work

Hepatitis C Mentor and Support Group (HCMSG)

Hispanic Health Network

Housing Works

NEXT Distro

Stop Stigma Now

VOCAL New York

North Carolina

Advocacy House

North Carolina AIDS Action Network

North Carolina Harm Reduction Coalition (NCHRC)

Project Lazarus

Smoky Mountain Harm Reduction

Western North Carolina AIDS Project

North Dakota

Fargo Cass Public Health

Ohio

Caracole Prevention Program
Equitas Health
Ohio Asian American Health Coalition (OAAHC)

The "DIRT" Advocacy Movement The HIV Sankofa Initiative

Oklahoma

Oklahoma Harm Reduction Alliance Shots Tulsa

Oregon

Caring Ambassadors Program
Cascade AIDS Project
Equality Federation
HIV Alliance
OHSU Partnership Project

Pennsylvania

AIDS Law Project of Pennsylvania
AIM Angels In Motion
Allies for Health + Wellbeing
Community Liver Alliance
Family Service Association of Bucks County
HepTREC
Lancaster Harm Reduction Project, Inc
Opioid Crisis Response Fund
Prevention Point Pittsburgh
SELF Inc.
Why Not Prosper

Puerto Rico

Intercambios

South Carolina

Challenges Inc

South Dakota

Lakota Youth Development

Tennessee

A Betor Way Chattanooga CARES Friends For Life, Corp Music City PrEP Clinic

Tevas

Legacy Community Health Services, Inc. Lets Grow Beautifully Together Qmunity Center Prism Health North Texas Texas Harm Reduction Alliance (THRA)

Utah

Utah Naloxone

Vermont

AIDS Project of Southern Vermont

Virginia

Virginia Harm Reduction Coalition

Washington

Blue Mountain Heart To Heart Conspiracy of Geniuses Dave Purchase Project Hepatitis Education Project Reframe Health and Justice Consulting The People's Harm Reduction Alliance

West Virginia

Community Education Group
Milan Puskar Health Right
West Virginia Drug Intervention Institute
West Virginia Exchange Union (WVEU)
West Virginia Hepatitis Academic Mentoring Partnership (WVHAMP)

Wisconsin

Vivent Health

Washington D.C.

Georgetown Medical AIDS Advocacy Group Harm Reduction Experts Improving Lives (HIPS)