

2021 Meetings with Members of Congress/staff

Here are some suggested talking points to help guide your meetings. Adding specific local examples is a great way to convey broader messages.

- Thank you for meeting with **me/us** today.
- As we are all aware, we are in the midst of the most challenging public health emergency in 100 years.
- Local health departments like mine are on the front lines of the COVID-19 response; they have been and will continue to be.
- We are using our expertise and local partnerships to protect people from the virus, track where the disease is spreading, and educate the public about how to stay safe. We have a unique understanding of the impact of the virus at the local level and the challenges that are plaguing the response. Much of the sexual health workforce was pulled into COVID-19 detail, causing significant service disruptions. **{Here you should talk about local factors in your community and how HSH programs have been impacted by COVID response.}**

Workforce

- The COVID-19 pandemic has highlighted the need for sustained workforce capacity in local health departments like mine. Since 2008, local health departments have lost more than 20% of their workforce capacity, meaning that we started the pandemic with fewer trained staff and have had to shift our work away from other pressing public health challenges.
- We will need a strong workforce now and into the future in order to get through the pandemic and be better prepared for the next crisis and do the critical work of public health every day in between.
- We are grateful for the investments in public health workforce in the American Rescue Plan and hopeful that these funds will reach local health departments to support our workforce in the short-term, however, we still need to do more to recruit and retain top talent into these jobs.
- That is why NACCHO, along with over 100 other stakeholder groups, supports legislation to create a Public Health Loan Repayment Program, modelled on the national health service corps, to recruit and retain top talent into local, state and tribal health departments by incentivizing these jobs with loan repayment in exchange for 3 years of service.
 - a. **House Ask:** Would you cosponsor [HR 3297](#) bipartisan legislation by Rep. Crow (D-CO) and Dr. Michael Burgess(R-TX) to create this program?
 - *If yes: contact Daniel Tsang in Rep. Jason Crow's office*
Daniel.tsang@mail.house.gov
 - b. **Senate Ask:** Sen. Smith (D-MN) introduced this bill last Congress and is currently looking for original co-sponsors. Would you join this legislation?
 - If yes, contact Kripa Sreepada in Sen. Smith's office
Kripa_Sreepada@smith.senate.gov
 - c. **Senate ask:** NACCHO has requested a \$200 million appropriation to create this program. We hope you {your boss} will include \$200 million to start this program in his/her FY22 appropriations requests.

Infrastructure

- While investments in COVID response, including the American Rescue plan are incredibly important right now, we need sustainable and predictable investments in the governmental public health system for the long term.
- Sustained, predictable, and increased funding to public health would help to keep our communities safe, and local health departments equipped with the necessary resources to prepare for and respond to health emergencies.
- That is why NACCHO supports efforts to invest in public health infrastructure overall, especially Sen. Patty Murray's (D-WA) "[Public Health Infrastructure Saves Lives Act \(S. 674\)](#)" that would provide \$4.5 billion annually to support local, state, tribal and territorial health departments' core infrastructure needs, with a guaranteed amount reaching local health departments (at least 20%).
 - a. **Senate Ask:**

Would you {your boss} co-sponsor of the Public Health Infrastructure Saves Lives Act (S. 674)?

 - If yes, please contact: Kimi Chernoby kimi_chernoby@help.senate.gov

HIV/STI/Viral Hepatitis Program Appropriations

While baseline infrastructure funding is critical, we must also invest specifically in our nation's effort to fight HIV/STI/Viral Hepatitis. That is why we support the following:

- \$134 million in FY2022 for the CDC Viral Hepatitis Program.
- \$823 million for the CDC HIV Prevention program.
- \$371 million for the Ending the Epidemic Plan.
- \$273 million for the CDC STD Prevention program.

We also ask that Congress remove report language that prohibits federal funds to be used for the purchase of syringes for SSP programs, which makes it harder for these programs to be successful in stopping the spread of these diseases in our community.

Thank you for your time today. Please feel free to reach out to me at any time you have questions or need additional information.

Background information:

[COVID-19 Infographic](#)

[Public Health Workforce](#)

[AIDS Budget & Appropriations Coalition Funding Chart](#)

[Public Health Infrastructure Saves Lives Act](#) (Fact Sheet)