

September 6, 2024

The Honorable Charles Schumer
Majority Leader
US Senate
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Mitch McConnell
Minority Leader
US Senate
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Mike Johnson
Speaker of the House
US House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Hakeem Jeffries
Minority Leader
US House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Leader Schumer, Leader McConnell, Speaker Johnson, and Leader Jeffries,

Thank you for your continued leadership and support of our nation's governmental public health system. The undersigned organizations represent and support the work of public health professionals at the local, state, territorial, and Tribal levels, who work each day to improve the public's health and wellbeing. Our shared mission is to ensure that health promotion and disease prevention are given top priority in federal funding so all Americans can thrive. As Congress considers a Continuing Resolution in advance of full FY 2025 appropriations, we urge you to maintain funding for public health and to include the Administration's anomalies requests for the following critical public health programs:

➤ **Centers for Disease Control and Prevention Respiratory Virus Preparedness and Response**

Funding for expanded Respiratory Virus Preparedness and Response activities, which provide data to CDC on disease outbreaks and severity for decision-making on resource allocation and countermeasure development expires on September 30, 2024. Without the anomaly of \$50 million requested by the Administration, CDC will be unable to support critical seasonal respiratory virus surveillance, epidemiology, and laboratory capacity activities this upcoming fall and winter respiratory seasons. This funding is critical as our public health system addresses multiple respiratory viruses including flu, RSV, and COVID-19.

➤ **Centers for Disease Control and Prevention Wastewater Surveillance**

Funding for the Wastewater Surveillance program, which monitors wastewater for a range of public health concerns including COVID, mpox, opioids, as well as avian and seasonal flu, to help local and state public health agencies identify outbreak trends early, has been solely funded by supplemental appropriations such as the CARES Act and the American Rescue Plan Act of 2021. HHS estimates these funds will be exhausted in early December. This early warning system can detect small changes as a signal for early action, providing policy makers and the public with important information. Without the requested anomaly of \$20 million, CDC would be unable to continue operating this critical public health tool, leading to a loss in visibility and use of this critical data source.

➤ **Recurring COVID American Rescue Plan Rescissions**

The requested anomaly is needed so that COVID balances provided to HHS in the American Rescue Plan Act of 2021 can continue to be obligated during the period covered by the Continuing Resolution. This is necessary so that HHS can continue to support critical avian flu and COVID response activities. As public

health agencies continue to respond to the multistate outbreak of avian flu, it is important these funds remain available so public health agencies can continue supporting outreach, surveillance, and prevention efforts as the number of infected dairy cow herds grows. Additionally, the public health system needs support ahead of the upcoming respiratory virus season as COVID-19 is rising across the country. These funds are critical to the work of local, state, territorial, and Tribal health departments and public health laboratories responding to simultaneous public health concerns.

➤ **Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children**

Funding of \$7.7 billion for the Department of Agriculture, Food and Nutrition Service, Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children (WIC) account is needed to support all women, infants, and children who seek to participate. With rising food costs and increased program participation, it is critical that adequate funding is made available for this program, without a gap that would put services at risk for those who need them. WIC provides pregnant people, new moms, and toddlers with the nutrition assistance, formula, and breastfeeding counseling they so desperately need. Without the requested anomaly, WIC providers, including nearly two-thirds of local health departments, may not be able to serve all eligible participants at the current benefit levels.

Each of these anomalies would support a public health program critical to current public health operations. We urge you to include them in any upcoming Continuing Resolution legislation. Thank you for your consideration of these requests. If you have any questions, please contact Adriane Casalotti, NACCHO's Chief of Government and Public Affairs, at acasalotti@naccho.org.

Sincerely,
National Association of County and City Health Officials
American Public Health Association
Association of Public Health Laboratories
Association of State and Territorial Health Officials
Big Cities Health Coalition
Council of State and Territorial Epidemiologists
Trust for America's Health

CC:

The Honorable Patty Murray
The Honorable Susan Collins
The Honorable Tom Cole
The Honorable Rosa L. DeLauro