

June 21, 2018

The Honorable Roy Blunt  
Chairman  
Subcommittee on Labor, HHS and  
Education Committee on Appropriations  
United States Senate  
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Patty Murray  
Ranking Member  
Subcommittee on Labor, HHS and Education  
Committee on Appropriations  
United States Senate  
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairman Blunt and Ranking Member Murray:

On behalf of organizations and communities working toward ensuring healthy opportunities are available to all individuals regardless of race, ethnicity, or socioeconomic status, we are writing to urge you to include \$57.95 million for the Racial and Ethnic Approaches to Community Health program (REACH) in the Fiscal Year 2019 Labor, HHS and Education Appropriations Bill.

While we deeply appreciate that REACH was funded in the final FY2018 omnibus, REACH has not received a funding increase since FY 2015, when it was boosted by just \$950,000. The program is the only federal investment directly addressing health disparities and the only community health program currently funded at the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). Given our country's costly chronic health problems and the fact that population based health interventions are a proven way to improve health outcomes, it is time for Congress to better invest in REACH.

The CDC's recent grants notice for REACH reflects a new five-year initiative and wraps up the previous funding period in which 49 grantees came from a variety of governmental and nongovernmental organizations, including state and local health departments, tribes/tribal organizations, universities and community-based organizations. REACH partners identify, develop, and disseminate effective strategies for addressing health disparities across a wide range of health priority areas such as cardiovascular disease, diabetes, breast and cervical cancer, infant mortality, asthma, immunization, and obesity. Awardees create healthier communities by strengthening the capacity and implementing tailored evidence- and practice-based strategies that will reach the selected priority population across multiple settings.

REACH is advancing locally driven strategies that work to eliminate racial and ethnic health disparities in chronic disease and related risk factors. Some highlights of current grantees include:

- The Coeur d'Alene Tribe in Northern Idaho has improved participation in aerobic workout programs by adopting traditional dance, leveraging what their community is most familiar with.
- The Montgomery Area Community Wellness Coalition in Alabama has partnered with corner stores to both improve their sales of produce by over 30%, with customers reporting eating more fruits and vegetables during the initiative.
- In Ohio, Salaam Cleveland worked with the local Muslim community to convert an underused warehouse space into a gym, hosting recreational activities particularly for women and girls.
- Cultiva La Salud, has worked with underserved Latino communities in the Fresno, California area to bring farm stands to locations where healthy food is hard to find or afford.

Data demonstrates the value of REACH. CDC conducted a REACH US Risk Factor Survey from 2009 to 2012 gathering health and behavior information from REACH US communities about chronic disease prevalence, fruit and vegetable consumption, physical activity levels, prevention services use, and adult immunizations rates.

- Over the 3-year intervention period, smoking prevalence decreased on average 7.5% (or an average of 2.5% per year) among African Americans and 4.5% among Hispanics.
- In REACH communities that focused on cardiovascular disease or diabetes during this time, the percentage of adults who reported eating five or more fruits and vegetables daily increased 3.9% among African Americans and 9.3% among Hispanics.
- The percentage of adults aged 65 years or older who had an influenza shot in the past year increased on average 11.1% across the 3-year intervention period.

Since FY 2017, REACH has set aside \$16 million for Good Health and Wellness in Indian Country grants to improve health outcomes for American Indians and Alaska Natives. The program has funded 12 tribes to work on effective community-chosen and culturally adapted strategies to reduce the leading causes of chronic conditions, increase health literacy, and strengthen community-clinical links. To ensure best practices are followed, 11 tribal epidemiology centers provide technical assistance and evaluate the program at the tribe and area levels.

We urge you to increase investment in public health through REACH, allowing the new round of grantees to improve health outcomes and address disparities. Thank you in advance for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics  
 Access to Holistic and Productive Living Institute, LLC (MD)  
 ADAP Advocacy Association  
 Advocates for Better Children's Diets  
 American Association on Health and Disability  
 American College of Nurse-Midwives  
 American College of Sports Medicine  
 American Council on Exercise  
 American Medical Student Association  
 American Muslim Health Professionals  
 Asian & Pacific Islander American Health Forum  
 American Public Health Association  
 Asian Health Coalition (IL)  
 Asian Services In Action (OH)  
 Association for Prevention and Teaching Research  
 Association of Minority Health Professions Schools

Association of University Centers on Disabilities  
 Baby Cafe USA  
 Bronx Health REACH (NY)  
 CA4Health  
 California Pan-Ethnic Health Network  
 Cancer Council of the Pacific Islands  
 Center for Asian Health Equity (IL)  
 Center for Health Progress (CO)  
 Center for Law and Social Policy  
 Center for Southeast Asians (RI)  
 CenterLink: The Community of LGBT Centers  
 Central Valley Immigrant Integration Collaborative (CA)  
 ChangeLab Solutions  
 Children's Defense Fund (NY)  
 Chinese American Planning Council (NY)  
 CHOW Project (HI)  
 Coalition for Asian American Children and Families (NY)  
 Colorado Consumer Health Initiative  
 Colorado Fiscal Institute

Colorado Organization for Latina  
Opportunity and  
Reproductive Rights  
Colorado Ovarian Cancer  
Alliance  
Colorado School Medicaid  
Consortium  
Community Access National  
Network  
Community Catalyst  
Community Health Councils  
(CA)  
Congregation of Our Lady of  
Charity of the Good  
Shepherd, US Provinces  
Consumers for Affordable Health  
Care (ME)  
Cultiva La Salud  
Delaware Ecumenical Council on  
Children and Families  
Disability Law Colorado  
Empowering Pacific Islander  
Communities  
Equality New Mexico Foundation  
EverThrive Illinois  
Family Voices Colorado  
Farmworker Justice  
First Focus Campaign for  
Children  
Florida Policy Institute  
Georgia Watch  
Georgians for a Healthy Future  
GLMA: Health Professionals  
Advancing LGBT  
Equality  
Hannahville Indian Community  
(MI)  
Having Our Say Coalition (CA)  
Health Access MN  
Health & Medicine Policy  
Research Group (IL)  
Health Care for All New York  
Health Care for All Oregon-  
Action  
Health Resources in Action  
Healthy Gen (WA)  
Hep B United  
Hep Free Hawaii  
Hepatitis B Foundation  
Hispanic Health Network

Hogg Foundation for Mental Health  
Human Rights Watch  
Illinois Public Health Association  
Improving Kids' Environment (IN)  
In Our Own Voice: National Black  
Women's Reproductive  
Justice Agenda  
Institute for Family Health (NY)  
Inter Tribal Council of Michigan  
Iowa Public Health Association  
Justice in Aging  
Korean Community Services of  
Metropolitan New York,  
Inc.  
Lake County Health Department  
and Community Health  
Center (IL)  
Lakeshore Foundation  
Latino Commission on AIDS  
The Latino Health Insurance  
Program. Inc. (MA)  
Laurie M. Tisch Center for Food,  
Education, & Policy,  
Columbia University  
League of Women Voters of the  
United States  
Life Foundation (HI)  
The Los Angeles Trust for  
Children's Health (CA)  
Mandela Marketplace (CA)  
Maryland Citizen's Health Initiative  
Education Fund, Inc.  
McFarland & Associates, Inc. (MD)  
Mi Familia Vota  
Michigan Disability Rights  
Coalition  
MomsRising  
NAACP  
National Advocacy Center of the  
Sisters of the Good  
Shepherd  
National Association of  
Community Health  
Centers  
National Association of County  
and City Health Officials  
National Association of Counties  
National Association for Health  
and Fitness  
National Birth Equity Collaborative  
National Black Justice Coalition

National Center for Lesbian  
Rights  
National Complete Streets  
Coalition  
National Consumers League  
National Health Care for the  
Homeless Council  
National Health Law Program  
National Hispanic Medical  
Association  
National Latina Institute for  
Reproductive Health  
National Partnership for Women  
& Families  
National REACH Coalition  
National Recreation and Park  
Association  
National Tongan American  
Society  
NETWORK Lobby for Catholic  
Social Justice  
New Yorkers for Accessible  
Health Coverage  
NMAC  
NOELA Community Health  
Center (LA)  
Northwest Health Law Advocates  
Ohio Asian American Health  
Coalition  
Planned Parenthood Federation of  
America  
The Praxis Project  
Prevent Blindness  
Prevention Institute  
The Pride Center at Equality Park  
(FL)  
Public Justice Center (MD)  
Public Health Institute  
Public Health Institute of Western  
Massachusetts  
Rails-to-Trails Conservancy  
Raimi + Associates  
Redstone Global Center for  
Prevention and Wellness,  
George Washington  
University  
RESULTS  
Safe Kids Oakland County (MI)  
Safe Routes to School National  
Partnership

Sargent Shriver National Center  
on Poverty Law  
Sexuality Information and  
Education Council of the  
United States  
Smart Growth America  
Society for Public Health Education  
South Los Angeles Health Projects  
(CA)  
Southeast Asian Mutual Assistance  
Associations Coalition (PA)  
Southwest Center for Health  
Innovation (NM)  
Southwest Women's Law Center  
Summit Health Institute for  
Research and Education,  
Inc.  
Tennessee Health Care Campaign  
Tennessee Justice Center  
Trust for America's Health  
United Methodist Church -  
General Board of Church  
and Society  
United Sikhs  
Universal Health Care Action  
Network of Ohio  
University of Hawaii John A.  
Burns School of  
Medicine  
Utah Health Policy Project  
Vertical Strategies  
West Valley Neighborhoods  
Coalition (AZ)  
West Virginians for Affordable  
Health Care  
YMCA of the USA