



May 11, 2016

*Dedicated to the promotion,
protection and improvement of
the health of all Californians*

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Michelle Gibbons

Senator Holly Mitchell, Chair
Subcommittee on Health and Human Services,
Senate Committee on Budget
State Capitol, Room 5080
Sacramento, CA 95814

RE: Public Health Laboratory Training Program (Lab Aspire) Restoration

The County Health Executives Association of California (CHEAC), representing local health departments throughout our state, supports the restoration of the Public Health Laboratory Training Program. There has been an ongoing insufficient supply of qualified lab directors for California's 34 local public health laboratories. California public health lab directors are required to hold a doctorate degree, board certification, California Public Health Microbiologist certification and have at least four years of experience in a public health laboratory.

To address this problem, Lab Aspire was created in 2006 to provide local assistance grants to subsidize training, support, outreach and education, and provided funding for doctoral candidate stipends and post-doctoral fellowships for individuals training for public health laboratory directorships. This program was funded through the California Department of Public Health's Division of Communicable Disease Control. Lab Aspire was a collaboration between UCLA, UC Davis, UC Berkeley, the California Association of Public Health Laboratory Directors, and the California Conference of Local Health Officers. However, funding for this program was eliminated in 2012 due to state budget shortfalls.

The restored funding would allow individuals that would be eligible for a four-year commitment to accrue the four years of lab experience necessary to become a public health lab director. Public health laboratories are California's first line of defense against preventable communicable disease outbreaks and this funding will help assure their services will continue to be available. CHEAC urges your consideration for this needed investment in our state's public health infrastructure.

Sincerely,

As signed by

Michelle Gibbons,
Executive Director

cc: Honorable Members, Senate Committee on Budget, Sub Committee No. 3
Michelle Baass, Consultant, Senate Committee on Budget, Sub Committee No. 3
Kirk Feely, Consultant, Senate Republican Caucus
Kat DeBurgh, Health Officers Association of California