



May 13, 2019

The Honorable Eloise Gómez Reyes
Acting Chair, Assembly Budget Subcommittee No. 1 on Health and Human Services
State Capitol, Room 5155
Sacramento, CA 95814

RE: **\$40 MILLION FOR INFECTIOUS DISEASE PREVENTION, TESTING, AND TREATMENT**

Dear Assembly Member Reyes:

The County Health Executives Association of California (CHEAC) and the Health Officers Association of California (HOAC), representing our state's 61 local health departments are writing in support of the May Revision proposal to provide \$40 million one-time General Fund to local health departments and tribal communities to assist in providing infectious disease prevention, testing, and treatment services.

California's local health departments are statutorily mandated to prevent and control infectious diseases throughout the state, including over 80 reportable conditions, yet lack adequate resources to do so. State and federal funding for infectious disease control activities have declined considerably over time and are primarily siloed based on disease conditions.

California continues to be faced with staggering levels of infectious diseases, placing an enormous burden on the health of residents in our state. The California Department of Public Health (CDPH) indicates that approximately 360,000 cases of infectious diseases were reported in 2016, the bulk of which were sexually transmitted diseases (over 280,000). In other infectious disease areas, an estimated 5.8 million cases of foodborne illness occurred in 2016, leading to nearly 400 deaths. Approximately 1.1 million to 4.3 million cases of influenza occurred in 2016, leading to an estimated 1,400 to 6,800 deaths. Additionally, the 2017 Hepatitis A outbreak resulted in 704 cases, 461 hospitalizations, and 21 deaths. And in 2019, California is combatting the spread of measles with 44 cases confirmed in California as of May 8.

The figures above point to the significant need of additional local health department resources to investigate, prevent, and control additional transmission of infectious diseases experienced in our jurisdictions, and, as such, we support the proposal included in the May Revision. As the details of the proposal are fleshed out, CHEAC and HOAC appreciate your consideration and support of the following recommendations:

Providing Lump Sum Funding with Four-Year Expenditure Authority. Local health departments respectfully request that the funding be provided to local jurisdictions in a lump sum amount with the authority to spend the funds over four years. This allows the funding to be spread across more jurisdictions and maximizes the use of limited dollars most efficiently. For example, a jurisdiction could invest in the purchase of a mobile clinic, which would require a larger one-time investment and would allow the jurisdiction to quickly enhance their capacity to provide prevention, screening and treatment services over the long term. Alternatively, a jurisdiction may utilize the funding to increase limited-term infectious disease staffing, yet an annual allocation of smaller amounts may hinder their ability to do so. Further, a one-time disbursement of funding

would likely be administratively less burdensome on state operations, therefore maximizing the investment into local public health services.

Flexibility. The Governor’s proposal appears to provide flexible funding to treat all infectious diseases and is not siloed in nature. We encourage the Legislature to maintain the flexibility at the local level to utilize the funding to address the diversity of infectious diseases impacting California. With the overlap of various infectious diseases, including increasing STD rates and imminent risk of additional measles cases, jurisdictions will need the flexibility to be nimble in protecting their communities.

Consultation Regarding the Allocation. CHEAC and HOAC represent all 61 local health departments and respectfully request that CDPH partner with us in creating an allocation methodology that addresses the diversity amongst jurisdictions.

It is for these reasons that we support the May Revision proposal to provide \$40 million for infectious diseases to local health departments and tribal communities. CHEAC and HOAC respectfully urge your support of the proposal and further consideration of the recommendations outlined above.

Should you have any questions, please feel free to contact Michelle Gibbons at (916) 327-7540 or mgibbons@cheac.org or Kat DeBurgh at (916) 441-7405 or deburgh@calhealthofficers.org.

Sincerely,

As signed by

Michelle Gibbons
Executive Director, CHEAC

As signed by

Kat DeBurgh
Executive Director, HOAC

cc: Honorable Members, Assembly Budget Subcommittee No. 1 on Health and Human Services
Andrea Margolis, Consultant, Assembly Budget Subcommittee No. 1
Cyndi Hillery, Budget Director, Assembly Republican Caucus
Karen Smith, MD, MPH, Director, California Department of Public Health (CDPH)
Mark Ghaly, MD, MPH, Secretary, California Health and Human Services Agency (CHHS)
Adam Dorsey, Program Budget Manager, California Department of Finance (DOF)
Sonja Petek, Senior Fiscal & Policy Analyst, Legislative Analyst’s Office (LAO)