

#CACantWait

For Immediate Release

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**“CALIFORNIA CAN’T WAIT” COALITION WINS COMMITMENT FOR ONGOING STATE BUDGET
INVESTMENT IN PUBLIC HEALTH INFRASTRUCTURE & WORKFORCE**

*Governor, Legislature commit \$300 million annually & ongoing starting in 2022-23
after coalition rallied support for life-saving, equity-building investments*

Sacramento, CA -- Members of the “California Can’t Wait” coalition of local public health officials, county governments, frontline health workers, and community advocates announced that Governor Newsom and Legislators have committed to a new, \$300 million annual public health investment beginning in 2022-23. The investments, targeted to local health infrastructure, workforce development, and health equity measures, will begin to reverse a decade of decline in funding for local health departments that harmed response to COVID-19 and allowed devastating health inequities to persist.

“Nothing could make the value of our local public health infrastructure more clear than the pandemic we’ve just lived through; Californians now know without a doubt that essential public health functions like contact tracing, laboratories, and outreach to underserved communities not only save lives but keep our businesses afloat and schools open,” said Michelle Gibbons, Executive Director of the County Health Executives Association of California (CHEAC). “The work of rebuilding our public health infrastructure and workforce can’t begin soon enough; while the funding from this commitment will not flow until 2022-23, we are proud that Governor Newsom and Legislators have agreed that California can no longer afford to invest in public health only during a crisis. We are particularly grateful to the legislative champions who ensured these life-saving investments were not ignored, particularly Sen. Pan and Asm. Wood.”

The victory comes after the coalition united this year to press for these life-saving investments with a unified and powerful message: “California Can’t Wait” until the next crisis to invest in public health. Delaying urgently needed investments to 2022-23 means missing opportunities to prevent disease and reduce health disparities; still the agreement represents a significant step in the right direction after years of funding declines.

“After giving their all in the fight to save lives from COVID-19, California’s frontline workers knew their work was still not done: we had to make sure California never repeats the mistake of being unprepared and leaving communities of color so unequally vulnerable,” said Bob Schoonover, Executive Director of SEIU Local 721 and President of SEIU California. “While we are disappointed this budget puts off for another year investments already long overdue, we are gratified that SEIU members’ voices made a difference in this budget, with Governor Newsom and legislators finally committing to reverse a decade of neglect of our public health workforce. We are particularly grateful to Asm. Wood and Sen. Pan who stood with us to ensure a robust public health workforce is never again an afterthought, but a core part of California’s strategy for health equity.”

The California Can’t Wait coalition is led by CHEAC, the Service Employees International Union (SEIU) California, California State Association of Counties (CSAC), Urban Counties of California, Rural County Representatives of California, Health Officers Association of California, and Public Health Advocates. [Nearly 100 organizations support the Coalition’s proposal for \\$200 million](#) in annual state funding needed to begin rebuilding the battered infrastructure and workforce and help deliver on California’s promise of health equity.