

#CaCantWait
UNTIL THE NEXT CRISIS

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PUBLIC HEALTH
INFRASTRUCTURE **NOW**

#CaCantWait Coalition Applauds Critical Public Health Funds in Governor's Budget, Urges Additional Investments to Rebuild Battered Public Health Workforce, Infrastructure & Meet Equity Goals

***Governor's Budget Funds Last Year's \$300M
Baseline Commitment to Public Health***

Sacramento, CA -- California Can't Wait, a coalition of public health officials, local leaders, frontline workers, and health equity advocates applauded the Governor's January budget proposal for including \$300 million in added, ongoing state funds to begin rebuilding the state's battered local public health infrastructure and increase our public health workforce. Coalition members urge the Governor and Legislature to invest additional funding to address recruitment, retention, and pipeline challenges to ensure California's public health workforce is prepared for the next crisis and deliver on the state's health equity goals, coalition members said today.

Michelle Gibbons, Executive Director, County Health Executives Association of California:

"COVID-19 taught an unforgettable lesson: waiting until a crisis to invest in public health costs lives. California's local health departments are encouraged that Governor Newsom's budget keeps the commitment made last year to begin rebuilding our deeply under-resourced and understaffed local public health departments. Reversing a decade of steep decline in funding for life-saving public health functions is a critical first step toward preparing for the next crisis before it's too late.

"Two years into a pandemic that is still breaking devastating records, it's more clear than ever California's public health workforce must be prepared to defeat public health threats still in our midst - the spread of STDs, tuberculosis and an epidemic of chronic diseases - as well as risks on our horizon like climate change. Local public health agencies in every community are California's frontline in the fight to protect the health of all Californians and achieve health equity, and to do so, we must focus on strengthening the public health workforce pipeline."

Carmen Roberts, Member, SEIU Local 2015 and First Vice President, Homecare Industry

"Public health workers did everything we could to save lives from COVID-19, and yet we know so many more could have been saved if California had invested in preventing disease, getting ready for disaster, and eliminating health disparities. SEIU workers demanded California rebuild our public health workforce and we applaud Governor Newsom for keeping the commitment made last year. The Governor's budget begins to reverse critical lost capacity; going forward we will press for the much bolder investments needed to address long overdue, deadly disparities in communities like mine."

Kat DeBurgh, Executive Director, Health Officers Association of California:

"We believe every Californian deserves to be served by a well-staffed, fully-funded local health department. This investment is a strong step toward restoring needed public health protections throughout the state. Since the great recession, local health departments have lost staff, expertise, and critical infrastructure. With these funds, we can start to rebuild our health departments to protect our communities today and prepare for the pandemics of the future."

Graham Knauss, Executive Director, California State Association of Counties

“CSAC supports the Governor’s 2022-23 State Budget Proposal, which includes ongoing investments to support the public health infrastructure that continues to provide many vital, ongoing services to California’s communities.”

Dan Miller, Chair, Rural County Representatives of California and Supervisor, Nevada County

“On behalf of our rural member counties, I am grateful to Governor Gavin Newsom for including \$200 million for local public health in the California State Budget. This investment is critical for supporting public health workforce and infrastructure development in rural communities and is necessary to ensure robust resources to prepare for the next crisis, protect the public’s health and address health disparities both now and into the future.”

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The California Can't Wait Coalition is a broad-based group of 84 organizations dedicated to protecting the health and safety of our communities and delivering health equity. Led by local public health departments, county governments, frontline workers, and community advocates, we urge the Legislature to remain committed to investing \$300M annually to rebuild our public health workforce and infrastructure, with \$200M dedicated to local public health departments.