

#CACantWait

UNTIL THE NEXT CRISIS

June 9, 2022

The Honorable Governor Newsom
Governor, State of California
1021 O Street, Suite 9000
Sacramento, CA 95814

RE: Public Health Infrastructure and Workforce Investments – Adopt Legislative Budget Package

Dear Governor Newsom,

The undersigned organizations, representing the California Can't Wait Coalition, respectfully urge you and your Administration to adopt the \$300 million annual investment in public health infrastructure, which dedicates \$200 million annually for local health departments, and a \$195.5 million one-time investment in public health workforce development programs included in the Legislature's budget framework.

We are grateful for your leadership in including \$200 million for local health department infrastructure in your January budget proposal. With these funds, our local health departments will be able to add new positions and/or maintain the workforce hired during the pandemic with limited-term federal funds.

We also agree that California's SMARTER Plan must build upon lessons learned from our COVID-19 response. One vital lesson that must not be lost is that local health departments are instrumental in protecting lives, ensuring health equity, and avoiding excess social and economic disruption. Our local health departments are the first line of defense against all public health threats and rely on a highly skilled and specialized workforce.

Even before the pandemic, public health departments have faced significant workforce challenges. Fewer than one in six graduates from schools of public health go on to work in governmental public health and nationwide, public health lost roughly 50,000 jobs after the Great Recession. The COVID-19 pandemic has exacerbated these challenges as public health workers have grappled with burnout and harassment, while also being heavily recruited by other sectors.

Our nation has experienced what understaffed and under-resourced local public health departments mean for community spread of disease and outcomes during a pandemic, and California is no exception. We have the opportunity to rebuild the public health workforce through ongoing funding for positions, recruitment and retention, and training and pipeline investments.

It is for these reasons that our organizations respectfully urge your Administration to adopt the Legislature's investments of \$300 million annually for public health infrastructure, which dedicates \$200 million annually for local health departments, and \$195.5 million one-time for public health workforce development programs, which align with the California Can't Wait Coalition's Public Health Equity and Readiness Opportunity (Public HERO) Initiative.

Respectfully,

As signed by

Michelle Gibbons
Executive Director
County Health Executives Association of
California

As signed by

Kat DeBurgh
Executive Director
Health Officers Association of California

As signed by

Beth Malinowski
Government Relations Advocate
SEIU California

As signed by

Farrah McDaid Ting
Legislative Representative
California State Association of Counties

As signed by

Sarah Duckett
Legislative Advocate
Rural County Representatives of California

As signed by

Kelly Brooks-Lindsey
Legislative Advocate
Urban Counties of California

As signed by

Harold Goldstein, DrPH
Executive Director
Public Health Advocates

cc: Keely Bosler, Director, California Department of Finance
Dr. Mark Ghaly, Secretary, California Health and Human Services Agency
Dr. Tomás Aragón, Director and State Public Health Officer, California Dept. of Public Health

Elizabeth Landsberg, Director, Department of Health Care Access and Information

Angie Wei, Legislative Affairs Secretary, Office of the Governor

Richard Figueroa, Legislative Affairs Secretary, Office of Governor Gavin Newsom

Tam Ma, Deputy Legislative Secretary, Office of Governor Gavin Newsom

The Honorable Nancy Skinner, Chair, Senate Budget and Fiscal Review Committee

The Honorable Phil Ting, Chair, Assembly Budget Committee

Honorable Members, Senate Budget and Fiscal Review Committee

Honorable Members, Assembly Budget Committee

Marjorie Swartz, Policy Consultant, Office of the Senate President Pro Tempore

Myesha Jackson, Policy Director, Office of the Assembly Speaker

Elisa Wynne, Staff Director, Senate Budget & Fiscal Review Committee

Scott Ogus, Deputy Staff Director, Senate Committee on Budget and Fiscal Review Committee

Christian Griffith, Chief Consultant, Assembly Budget Committee

Andrea Margolis, Consultant, Assembly Budget Committee