

#CACantWait

UNTIL THE NEXT CRISIS

March 14, 2023

The Honorable Caroline Menjivar
Chair, Senate Budget & Fiscal Review Subcommittee No. 3 on Health & Human Services
1021 O Street, Room 6720
Sacramento, CA 95814

RE: Reject Governor's Proposal to Cut \$49.8 Million in Public Health Workforce Development and Training Programs – Set for Hearing in Sen. Sub. 3 on March 16

Dear Senator Menjivar:

The undersigned organizations, representing the California Can't Wait Coalition, strongly oppose the Governor's January budget proposal to cut \$49.8 million in public health workforce training and development programs enacted in the 2022 Budget Act.

Local public health departments are the first line of defense against all public health threats, and these departments rely on a highly skilled and specialized workforce that are often stretched far too thin. 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, and 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.

The proposed \$49.8 million cut would impact all or some of the following public health workforce training and development programs:

- **Public Health Workforce Career Ladder Education and Development Program** that provides education and training for existing employees within the public health workforce. The program would provide stipends to offset up to 12 hours per workweek to complete educational requirements and would make local health department employers, eligible for enhanced grants to hire additional employees to support the goals of the program.
- **California Public Health Pathways Training Corps** administered by CDPH, provides a workforce pathway for early-career public health professionals from diverse backgrounds and disproportionately affected communities to conduct communicable disease prevention and control, community engagement, and emergency response activities at local health department host sites.

- **California Microbiologist Training** increases the number of Public Health Microbiologist Trainee spots in California, a requirement that must be fulfilled to become a California Certified Public Health Microbiologists.
- **Public Health Lab Aspire** addresses the severe shortage of trained and qualified public health laboratory directors.
- **California Epidemiologic Investigation Service (Cal-EIS)** prepares epidemiologists for public health leadership positions throughout California. Fellows are placed in CDPH offices or in local health departments throughout the state.

These programs are the few initiatives dedicated to supporting the public health workforce pipeline in California. Of note, while other workforce-related investments are being proposed for a deferral in the Governor's January budget, the public health workforce investment items above are slated to be cut – not deferred.

Our nation has experienced what understaffed and under-resourced local public health departments mean for community spread and outcomes during a pandemic, and California is no exception. We must continue to support the public health workforce and ensure opportunities for training and development. It is for these reasons that our organizations respectfully urge your committee to reject the Administration's budget proposal to cut \$49.8 million for public health workforce training and development programs.

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

Jolie Onodera
Legislative Advocate
California State Association of Counties

As signed by

Sarah Dukett
Policy 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: Honorable Members, Senate Budget & Fiscal Review Subcommittee No. 3
Scott Ogus, Deputy Staff Director, Senate Budget & Fiscal Review Committee
Elissa Wynne, Staff Director, Senate Budget & Fiscal Review Committee
Anthony Archie, Consultant, Senate Republican Caucus
Kirk Feely, Fiscal Director, Senate Republican Caucus
Marjorie Swartz, Office of the Senate President pro Tempore
Joe Stephenshaw, 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
Richard Figueroa, Legislative Affairs Secretary, Office of Governor Gavin Newsom
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