



**#CACantWait**  
UNTIL THE NEXT CRISIS

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## **Public Health Leaders Say State Budget Deal Will Save Lives and Deliver Health Equity**

SACRAMENTO, CA — California Can't Wait, a coalition of public health officials, local leaders, frontline workers, and health equity advocates applauded Governor Newsom, Senate President pro Tem Toni Atkins, Assembly Speaker Anthony Rendon, and Senate and Assembly budget chairs for reaching a state budget agreement that maintains urgent funding for California's state and local public health departments. The FY 23-24 State Budget Agreement maintains \$75.6M in one-time Public Health Equity and Readiness Opportunity (PublicHERO) funding to develop and train our next generation of frontline public health heroes and \$300M in ongoing Future of Public Health Funding to begin to rebuild our decimated state and local public health infrastructure.

"California's local public health officials thank Governor Newsom, Senate and Assembly leaders and budget chairs for supporting frontline public health heroes with investments urgently needed to begin rebuilding our public health workforce and infrastructure," said **Michelle Gibbons, Executive Director, County Health Executives Association of California**. "The COVID-19 pandemic underscored that strong, local public health departments are vital to defending and protecting our communities against disease and illness, delivering health equity, and keeping schools and businesses open.

"These crucial one-time PublicHERO investments in our future public health workforce pipeline will save lives, enabling California to begin developing the next generation of public health professionals critical to addressing social determinants of health, preventing disease, and making progress toward our health equity goals," Gibbons continued.

"Even past the point of 'public health emergency,' public health professionals know our work isn't yet done. We are fighting threats to Californians every day - from stopping the spread of

food-borne illness to STI and chronic disease prevention, and we are doing it with a workforce that has been hollowed out, stressed out, and exhausted,” said **Arik Alba, Santa Clara County Public Health Nurse, SEIU 521 Member**. “The investments in this budget are an opportunity to strengthen our frontline against disease and recruit and retain the diverse workforce with deep community connections needed to advance health equity.”

"We commend the Governor and the Legislature for funding our public health workforce at this critical moment," said **Flojaune G. Cofer, PhD, MPH Senior Director of State Policy**. California's public health infrastructure is an essential backstop against health disparities and inequities. It prioritizes getting help to where it is needed most. While our state still faces so many public health challenges, this funding puts us in a position to address them."

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