

# #CACantWait

## UNTIL THE NEXT CRISIS

June 3, 2024

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

**RE: Future of Public Health Workforce and Infrastructure Investment – ADOPT LEGISLATIVE BUDGET AGREEMENT TO MAINTAIN FUNDING**

Dear Governor Newsom,

The undersigned organizations, representing the California Can't Wait Coalition, respectfully urge you and your Administration to adopt the Legislature's budget package which continues the ongoing \$300 million General Fund investment for state and local public health workforce and infrastructure, including \$200 million to support local health departments.

Local health departments have made significant progress in hiring staff positions to strengthen public health capacities and capabilities in areas including, but not limited to infectious disease prevention and control, communications, emergency preparedness and response, family health, public health laboratories, and environmental health.

According to recent progress reports submitted to the California Department of Public Health (CDPH), Future of Public Health (FoPH) funds support over 1,100 currently filled positions. Across the state, FoPH is protecting and improving the health of our communities. Brief examples include:

- In Butte, FoPH staff responded to a recent shigella outbreak among an unhoused population, leveraging a disease intervention specialist, infection prevention nurse, and epidemiologist to form the county's rapid response and real-time mitigation efforts.
- Contra Costa hired staff to fill essential gaps in programs like HIV outreach/surveillance, communicable disease surveillance, and case management for diseases including tuberculosis, COVID-19, Hepatitis C, and Syphilis.
- Fresno County supports a rural mobile health unit to better reach rural and isolated areas of the county. The mobile unit has supported nearly 200 community events serving over 5,000 people, offering community health worker navigation and immunization services, among others.
- In Los Angeles, FoPH staff are currently responding to the Hepatitis A outbreak among homeless populations, including offering vaccinations to unhoused individuals.
- San Francisco supports robust data analytics capabilities, including staff positions such

as epidemiologists, analysts, and other public health professionals, to monitor and assess public health threats and prioritize recommendations and interventions by sharing data and delivering actionable communications.

- Santa Clara supports their Wastewater-Based Epidemiology Program and expanded their wastewater surveillance to include flu, mpox, and other infectious diseases.
- Trinity County hired a public health nurse for the communicable disease program to increase infrastructure and respond to exponential increases in syphilis cases and other threats.

Funds have also been used to support enhanced community engagement through hosting community events and conducting community health needs assessments and community health improvement plans. Other examples of how funds are being used locally can be viewed on our website: <https://cheac.org/california-cant-wait-protect-public-health-funding-now/>

Eliminating this funding would have serious and detrimental impacts to local health department services and operations, as well as public health professionals. Importantly, public health is uniquely distinct from the health care delivery system, and the health care delivery system is unlikely to be able to step into the void left by the loss of this critical public health infrastructure.

We must acknowledge the lessons learned from the COVID-19 pandemic, especially that state and 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.

Our nation has experienced what understaffed and under-resourced local public health departments mean for community disease spread and outcomes during a pandemic, and California is no exception. California must not turn its back on our vital public health workforce as we continue to respond to existing and emerging public health threats.

It is for these reasons that our organizations respectfully urge the Administration to adopt the Legislative Budget Agreement to maintain funding for Future of Public Health investments.

Respectfully,

*As signed by*

Michelle Gibbons  
Executive Director  
County Health Executives Association of  
California (CHEAC)

*As signed by*

Kat DeBurgh  
Executive Director  
Health Officers Association of California

California Can't Wait Coalition – Continue Future of Public Health Investment  
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*As signed by*

Beth Malinowski  
Government Relations Advocate  
SEIU California

*As signed by*

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Senior Legislative Advocate  
California State Association of Counties

*As signed by*

Sarah Dukett  
Policy Advocate  
Rural County Representatives of California

*As signed by*

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Legislative Advocate  
Urban Counties of California

*As signed by*

Harold Goldstein, DrPH  
Executive Director  
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*As signed by*

Janice O'Malley  
Legislative & Political Action Representative  
American Federation of State, County, and  
Municipal Employees (AFSCME)

*As signed by*

Ronald Coleman Baeza  
Managing Director of Policy  
California Pan-Ethnic Health Network (CPEHN)

*As signed by*

Sebastian Perez  
Policy Committee Co-Chair  
End the Epidemics

*As signed by*

Matthew Marsom  
Chief, Programs, Policy, and Government  
Relations Officer  
Public Health Institute

cc: Joe Stephenshaw, Director, California Department of Finance  
Dr. Mark Ghaly, Secretary, California Health & Human Services Agency  
Dr. Tomás Aragón, Director and State Public Health Officer, California Dept. of Public Health  
Richard Figueroa, Deputy Cabinet Secretary, Office of Governor Gavin Newsom  
Angela Pontes, Chief Deputy Legislative Secretary, Office of Governor Gavin Newsom  
Honorable Members, Senate Budget and Fiscal Review Committee  
Honorable Members, Assembly Budget Committee  
Marjorie Swartz, Policy Consultant, Office of the Senate President Pro Tempore  
Rosielyn Pulmano, Policy Consultant, 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

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