



March 9, 2020

The Honorable Rosa DeLauro  
 Chair  
 House Appropriations Subcommittee  
 on Labor, Health and Human Services,  
 Education, and Related Agencies  
 Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Tom Cole  
 Ranking Member  
 House Appropriations Subcommittee  
 on Labor, Health and Human Services,  
 Education, and Related Agencies  
 Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Roy Blunt  
 Chair  
 Senate Appropriations Subcommittee  
 on Labor, Health and Human Services,  
 Education, and Related Agencies  
 Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Patty Murray  
 Ranking Member  
 Senate Appropriations Subcommittee  
 on Labor, Health and Human Services,  
 Education, and Related Agencies  
 Washington, DC 20510

Dear Chairwoman DeLauro, Chairman Blunt and Ranking Members Cole and Murray:

The undersigned public and environmental health organizations urge you to increase funding for the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's Climate and Health Program to \$15 million in the FY 2021 Labor, Health and Human Services, Education and Related Agencies Appropriations bill. This funding is critical for helping state and local health departments prepare and protect their communities from the health threats posed by climate change that they are already experiencing.

Climate change is a public health emergency. Urgent action is needed to reduce the carbon and methane emissions that cause climate change and stave off worse impacts in the future, but we must also provide the public health workforce with adequate resources to identify risks and develop and implement climate adaptation action plans to protect communities across the country that are already experiencing health harms due to climate change. CDC's Climate and Health Program is the only federal program that helps states, cities, territories and tribes prepare for and respond to the specific health impacts of climate change.

These health impacts threaten the patients and communities that our organizations serve. Broadly speaking, these impacts include increased spread of vector-borne diseases, degraded air quality from ozone pollution and wildfire smoke, hotter temperatures, extreme weather events and longer allergy seasons. Communities and states must have the resources necessary to understand specific current and anticipated health impacts of climate change, and take steps to protect the public's health.

The Climate and Health Program currently funds 16 states, two cities and three tribes (covering 50 percent of the U.S. population). Examples of the critical projects supported by this program include: the development of a vulnerability mapping tool in Massachusetts; a climate change and healthy homes curriculum for community health workers in Maryland; the identification of specific communities at greatest risk due to sea level rise in North Carolina; and, educational programs for rural elders on heat stress and for day-camp counselors on tick exposures in New Hampshire.

Increasing funding for this program to \$15 million would serve two critical purposes. First, it would allow CDC to fund work in additional locations. Second, it would allow CDC to evaluate the existing grantees' work to identify and be able to share best practices with communities nationwide. Given public health resource constraints, evaluating existing programs and broadly sharing lessons learned is a commonsense step that can help save lives across the nation.

Americans today experience negative health impacts due to climate change. Further investment in the Climate and Health Program will help communities across the country better prepare and protect their residents from the many health threats we are already experiencing due to climate change. Thank you for considering our recommendation and we look forward to working with you throughout the appropriations process.

Sincerely,

Allergy & Asthma Network  
Alliance of Nurses for Healthy Environments  
American Academy of Pediatrics  
Asthma and Allergy Foundation of America  
American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists  
American College of Physicians  
American Lung Association  
American Public Health Association  
American Thoracic Society  
Association of Schools and Programs of Public Health  
Children's Environmental Health Network  
Climate for Health  
Health Care Without Harm  
National Association of County and City Health Officials  
National Environmental Health Association  
National WIC Association  
Physicians for Social Responsibility  
Public Health Institute  
Trust for America's Health