

The Public Health Infrastructure Saves Lives Act of 2021 (S. 674)

Background

COVID-19 is a stark reminder of the importance of our public health infrastructure and workforce. Public health departments must respond quickly to emergencies while maintaining the day-to-day work they do to support healthy communities. But annual spending falls \$4.5 billion short of what is needed to ensure that all communities are served by health departments with comprehensive capabilities. The result is increased vulnerability to health emergencies like COVID-19, as well as to emerging and ongoing public health challenges like chronic diseases and substance misuse.

The Public Health Infrastructure Saves Lives Act (S. 674) would establish a Core Public Health Infrastructure Program at the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), awarding grants to state, local, tribal and territorial health departments to ensure they have the tools, workforce, and systems in place to address existing and emerging health threats and reduce health disparities.

Foundational Capabilities of Public Health



Assessment – disease surveillance, epidemiology and laboratory capacity



All Hazards Preparedness and Response – the capacity to respond to public health threats



Policy Development & Support – the ability to serve as expert resource for public health policy



Communications – the ability to translate public health science to messaging for media, public, healthcare



Community Partnership – the ability to convene and build strategic partnerships across sectors



Leadership & Governance - the ability to lead internal and external stakeholders to consensus and action



Accountability – Performance management and quality improvement



Equity – the capacity to end and prevent disparities and promote optimal health in all communities

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Summary

HOW WILL SUSTAINED INVESTMENT PREVENT FUTURE PANDEMICS?

The chronic underfunding of public health has limited health departments' ability to modernize labs, surveillance systems, and informatics, retain a skilled workforce, and to address the underlying health conditions that put so many people at heightened risk from COVID-19. The nation's response to COVID-19 would have been stronger with sufficient infrastructure and workforce in health departments. Such support would have resulted in greater capacity to identify cases, communicate effectively, locate those who had been exposed, and quickly put policies in place that would reduce the need to shut down schools and workplaces.

The repeated "boom and bust" cycle of funding public health only during emergencies has resulted in a shrunken workforce, archaic technologies, and stark health inequities. A consistent, long-term commitment to cross-cutting public health capabilities will enable health agencies to modernize, innovate, and maintain an experienced workforce.

BILL SUMMARY

The bill would create a Core Public Health Infrastructure Program at CDC to help modernize public health at every level to ensure every American is served by a 21st century health department:

- State, tribal, territorial and local health departments would receive sustained funding to address the foundational capabilities of public health, a core [set of activities and measures](#) that ensure they have the tools, highly trained workforce and systems in place to address existing and emerging health threats.
- The program would award grants to all state and territorial health departments, and to local health departments serving over 500,000 people, based on a formula determined by factors including population size, burden of preventable disease and disability, and poverty rate.
- Additional competitive grants would be available based on core public health infrastructure needs to local and tribal health departments.
- Grantees would also be eligible for technical assistance from the CDC.
- Grant awards would supplement, and not supplant, existing public health department resources

KEY FACTS

- Only about [half of the U.S. population](#) is served by a comprehensive public health system.
- Experts estimate a [\\$4.5 billion annual shortfall](#) in building foundational capabilities, or \$13 per person.
- Even before the pandemic, state health agencies lost [nearly 10% of their workforce](#) from 2012-2019, while local health departments lost [about 16% of their staff](#) from 2008-2019.



FOR MORE INFORMATION, CONTACT:

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Supporting Organizations

- AFSCME
- ALPHA, LLC
- Alzheimer's Association and Alzheimer's Impact Movement
- American Academy of Allergy, Asthma & Immunology
- American Academy of Nursing
- American Association for Clinical Chemistry
- American Association for Respiratory Care
- American Association on Health and Disability
- American Clinical Laboratory Association
- American College of Clinical Pharmacy
- American Federation of Teachers
- American Health Information Management Association
- American Heart Association
- American Lung Association
- American Medical Student Association
- American Physical Therapy Association
- American Public Health Association
- American Society for Clinical Pathology
- American Society for Microbiology
- American Society of Tropical Medicine & Hygiene
- Arthritis Foundation
- Asian & Pacific Islander Health Forum
- Association for Prevention Teaching and Research
- Association for Professionals in Infection Control and Epidemiology
- Association of American Medical Colleges
- Association of Maternal & Child Health Programs
- Association of Public Health Nutritionists
- Association of Schools and Programs of Public Health
- Association of State and Territorial Chronic Disease Program Directors
- Association of State And Territorial Health Officials
- Association of State Public Health
- Asthma and Allergy Foundation of America
- Autistic Self Advocacy Network
- Behavioral Health Association of Providers
- Big Cities Health Coalition
- Bipartisan Policy Center
- Buffalo Trace (KY) District Health Department
- Campaign for Tobacco-Free Kids
- Cancer Support Community
- Caring Ambassadors Program
- Cascade AIDS Project
- Center for Advocacy for the Rights and Interests of the Elderly (CARIE)
- Center for LGBTQ Economic Advancement & Research
- Chenango Health Network, Inc.
- Child Development Institute
- Coalition on Human Needs
- Commissioned Officers Association of the U.S. Public Health Service, Inc. (COA)
- Common Threads
- Congregation of Our Lady of Charity of the Good Shepherd, U.S. Provinces
- Cornell Cooperative Extension of Niagara County
- CTIPP
- Delaware Academy of Medicine and the Delaware Public Health Association
- Dorchester County Health Department
- Endocrine Society
- Entomological Society of America
- Epic Systems
- Epilepsy Alliance America
- Epilepsy Foundation
- FLIPANY
- Global Alliance for Behavioral Health and Social Justice
- Hawaii Health & Harm Reduction Center
- Hawaii State Rural Health Association
- Health in Justice Action Lab, Northeastern University
- Healthcare Leadership Council
- Healthcare Ready
- Hep Free Hawaii
- HIV + Hepatitis Policy Institute
- Illinois Public Health Association
- In the Public Interest
- International Certification & Reciprocity Consortium
- Johnson County Public Health, IA
- Jump IN for Healthy Kids
- Kansas City Health Department
- Lafayette County Health Department
- Lakeshore Foundation
- Lanai Community Health Center
- Louisiana Public Health Institute
- Lupus and Allied Diseases Association, Inc.
- Maine Public Health Association
- March of Dimes
- Mary Ann Liebert, Inc.
- Mason County (KY) Health Coalition
- National Center for Health Research
- National Environmental Health Association
- National Forum for Heart Disease & Stroke Prevention
- National League for Nursing
- National Network of Public Health Institutes
- National Nurse-Led Care Consortium
- National Tuberculosis Controllers Association (NTCA)
- National Viral Hepatitis Roundtable
- National WIC Association
- National Women's Health Network
- NETWORK Lobby for Catholic Social Justice
- Nevada Public Health Association
- New Jersey Public Health Association
- New York State Public Health Association
- Nurse-Family Partnership
- Ohio Public Health Association
- Partnership for Better Health
- Partnership for Public Health
- Peggy Lillis Foundation
- Prevent Blindness
- Prevention Institute
- PSR Arizona (NFP)
- Public Health Accreditation Board
- Public Health Foundation
- Public Health Management Corporation
- Redstone Center for Prevention and Wellness
- Research!America
- RiverStone Health
- Safe States Alliance
- Sandusky County Public Health
- Society for Maternal-Fetal Medicine
- Society for Public Health Education
- Southern California Public Health Association
- Spina Bifida Association

To add your organization to the list, fill out this [form](#).

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T

- Tahoe Health LLC
- The AIDS Institute
- The Consortium
- The Family Resource Network
- The Gerontological Society of America
- The Immunization Partnership
- The Society for Healthcare Epidemiology of America
- Trinity Health
- Trust for America's Health

W

- Washington State Board of Health
- Washington State Department of Health
- Washington State Public Health Association
- Wisconsin Association of Local Health Departments and Boards
- Wisconsin Public Health Association
- Women's Health Institute
- WSALPHO

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