

September 24, 2019

The Honorable Roy Blunt  
Chairman  
Subcommittee on Labor, HHS, and Education  
Committee on Appropriations  
U.S. Senate  
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Patty Murray  
Ranking Member  
Subcommittee on Labor, HHS, and Education  
Committee on Appropriations  
U.S. Senate  
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Chairman Blunt and Ranking Member Murray:

As the Senate works to pass the FY 2020 Labor, Health and Human Services, Education, and Related Agencies appropriations bill and moves to Conference Committee with the House, the nearly 200 undersigned organizations are deeply concerned about the proposed elimination of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's (CDC) Racial and Ethnic Approaches to Community Health (REACH) program. **We urge the Senate to match the House number of \$71.95 million in funding for the REACH program.** REACH is one of the only community health programs funded by the CDC that is dedicated to reducing chronic disease for specific racial and ethnic groups in urban, rural, and tribal communities with high disease burden.

Racial and ethnic minority communities are disproportionately affected by chronic disease in America. Preventable diseases like diabetes, heart disease, high blood pressure, renal disease, and stroke in ethnic minority populations cost the healthcare system \$23.9 billion annually. These costs are expected to double by 2050. A study by EA Finkelstein, et al, found that obesity alone increased annual medical expenses in the U.S. by \$149 billion. Investing directly in communities with a history of tackling these issues works upstream to address the root causes of racial and ethnic disparities and reverse the costly trend of chronic disease.

Currently in its 20<sup>th</sup> year, the REACH program is advancing community-level strategies that are evidence based or reflect promising practices that work to eliminate racial and ethnic health disparities in chronic disease and related risk factors. Current funding levels only allow CDC to support 31 recipients out of a total of 261 approved but unfunded applications, pointing to the high demand and need for this program. These 31 REACH recipients are working to reduce health disparities among racial and ethnic minority populations with the highest burden of chronic disease (i.e., hypertension, heart disease, type 2 diabetes, and obesity) through culturally tailored interventions to address preventable risk behaviors (i.e., tobacco use, poor nutrition, and physical inactivity). The REACH program continues to show measurable change in the health and wellbeing of racial and ethnic minority communities with the greatest burden of disease. **The impact across REACH communities from 2014-2018 includes:**

- **Over 2.7 million people have better access to healthy food and beverages**
- **Over 650,00 people have benefited from tobacco-free interventions**
- **Approximately 1.3 million people have increased opportunities to be physically active; and**
- **Over 750,000 people have better access to new community-clinical linkages**

Despite the prevailing gains of the REACH program, Congress has not increased core REACH funding for many years. Since FY 2017, REACH has been reduced in order to fund the creation of the Good Health and Wellness in Indian Country (GHWIC) grant program which supports effective community-chosen and culturally adapted strategies to reduce the leading causes of chronic conditions, increase health literacy, and strengthen community-clinical linkages with tribal communities. However, in order to fund the

creation of the GHWIC grant program, the core REACH grants had \$53 million diverted over the past three fiscal years.

**Therefore, we are urging Congress to restore REACH funding in FY 2020 and continue to fund GHWIC which requires a total allocation of \$71.95 million. We are thankful that the House recommended FY 2020 funding at \$71.95 million, a level that advocates consider a satisfactory minimum to get the program back on track. We also ask Congress to ensure new funding goes to community organizations that qualified for REACH grants but were unfunded in the FY 2018 funding cycle, including organizations representing a diverse set of racial and ethnic minority groups.**

As REACH celebrates its 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary we urge Congress to invest in these REACH and GHWIC communities to improve health outcomes and address racial and ethnic health disparities. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

ACCESS Women's Health Justice  
ADAP Advocacy Association (aaa+)  
African American Ministers In Action  
African Family Holistic Health Organization  
All Youth Access  
American Association on Health and Disability  
American Cancer Society Cancer Action Network  
American College of Nurse-Midwives  
American Heart Association  
American Kidney Fund  
American Lung Association  
American Muslim Health Professionals  
American Public Health Association  
Arkansas Coalition of Marshallese  
Asian Americans Advancing Justice-Los Angeles  
Asian & Pacific Islander American Health Forum  
Asian Counseling and Referral Service  
Asian Health Coalition  
Asian Pacific Community in Action  
Asian Pacific Partners for Empowerment, Advocacy and Leadership (APPEAL)  
Asian Resources, Inc.  
Asian Services in Action, Inc. (ASIA)  
Association of American Medical Colleges  
Association of Asian Pacific Community Health Organizations  
Association of Minority Health Professions Schools  
Baby Cafe USA  
Bangladeshi American Public Affairs Committee  
Basics Inc  
Berean Wellness & Community Support Center  
Boat People SOS  
Bronx Health REACH  
Bronx Westchester AHEC

CA4Health  
California Center For Rural Policy  
California Hepatitis C Task Force  
California Pan-Ethnic Health Network  
Center for Health Innovation, New Mexico's Public Health Institute  
Center for Independence of the Disabled, NY  
Center for Science in the Public Interest  
CenterLink: The Community of LGBT Centers  
ChangeLab Solutions  
Childhood Obesity Prevention Coalition  
Children's Vision Massachusetts Coalition  
CHURCH ALIVE COMMUNITY CHURCH  
City of Miami Gardens  
CLASP  
Coalition for Asian American Children and Families  
Coalition for Disability Health Equity  
Coalition on Human Needs  
Community Catalyst  
Community Health Councils  
Community Welfare Services of Metro Detroit  
Congregation of Our Lady of the Good Shepherd, US Provinces  
Consumer Health First  
Creighton University  
Cumberland Cape Atlantic YMCA  
Cuyahoga County Board of Health  
Delaware Ecumenical Council on Children and Families  
Drug Policy Forum of Hawai'i  
Equality California  
Ethiopian and Eritrean Cultural and resource Center  
First Focus Campaign for Children  
Fresno Interdenominational Refugee Ministries  
G.O.A.L.S. For Women  
Georgians for a Healthy Future  
GLMA: Health Professionals Advancing LGBTQ Equality  
Groundswell at King of Glory Tabernacle  
Guam Breast and Cervical Cancer Early Detection Program  
Guam NCD Consortium  
Guam Regional Medical City  
Hawai'i Health & Harm Reduction Center  
Health Resources in Action  
Healthy Asian Americans Project  
Healthy Places by Design  
Hepatitis B Foundation  
Hep B United  
Hep Free Hawai'i  
Hepatitis B Foundation  
Hispanic Health Initiatives, Inc.  
Hogg Foundation for Mental Health

Hunts Point Alliance for Children  
Illinois Society for the Prevention of Blindness  
Immunize Nevada  
Impetus - Let's Get Started LLC  
Improving Kids' Environment  
In Our Own Voice: National Black Women's Reproductive Justice Agenda  
International Association of Hepatitis Task Forces  
International Nurses Society on Addictions (IntNSA)  
John A. Burns School of Medicine, University of Hawaii  
Khmer Health Advocates, Inc.  
Kokua Kalihi Valley  
Korean Community Services of Metropolitan NY  
Lakeshore Foundation  
Lanai Community Health Center  
Latino Coalition for a Healthy California  
Lehman College, CUNY  
Light and Salt Association  
Lumos Transforms  
Macomb Community Action  
March of Dimes  
Meharry Medical College  
Micronesia Health Advisory Coalition  
Mid-City CAN (Community Advocacy Network)  
Minneapolis Health Department  
Minnesota Breastfeeding Coalition  
MomsRising  
Morehouse School of Medicine  
Multnomah County Health Department  
N. Montgomery Citizens United for Prosperity  
NAACP - National Association for the Advancement of Colored People  
NAACP - Lubbock Chapter  
National Advocacy Center of the Sisters of the Good Shepherd  
National Alliance of Children's Trust and Prevention Funds  
National Association for Health and Fitness  
National Association of County and City Health Officials  
National Black Justice Coalition  
National Collaborative for Health Equity  
National Consumers League  
National Hispanic Medical Association  
National Kidney Foundation  
National Minority Quality Forum  
National REACH Coalition  
National Recreation and Park Association  
National Tongan American Society  
National Urban League  
National Women's Health Network  
NETWORK Lobby for Catholic Social Justice  
New Jersey Public Health Association

New Mexico Asian Family Center  
National Minority AIDS Council  
NOELA Community Health Center  
NYU Langone Health  
OCA Greater Cleveland Chapter  
People For the American Way  
People Helping People Agency  
Planned Parenthood Federation of America  
Prevent Blindness  
Prevent Blindness Texas  
Prevent Cancer Foundation  
Prevention Institute  
Public Health Advocates  
Public Health Institute  
Public Health Institute of Western MA  
Public Justice Center  
Raimi + Associates  
Redstone Center  
Regional Asthma Management and Prevention  
RESULTS  
RiverStone Health  
Rights and Democracy of VT and NH  
Safe Routes to School National Partnership  
Sexuality Information and Education Council of the United States (SIECUS)  
Silver State Equality-Nevada  
Society for Public Health Education  
Society of State Leaders of Health and Physical Education  
South Asian Network  
South Los Angeles Health Projects  
Southeast Asia Resource Action Center (SEARAC)  
Southern Jamaica Plain Health Center  
Southern Nevada Health District  
Specialty Pharmacy  
SSG/PALS for Health  
Summit Health Institute for Research and Education, Inc.  
Taulama for Tongans  
The Cambodian Family  
The Center for Health innovation  
The Los Angeles Trust for Children's Health  
The Praxis Project  
The Pride Center at Equality Park  
Three Pyramids, Inc.  
Trust for America's Health  
UnidosUS  
University of Hawaii John A Burns School of Medicine  
University of Hawaii System  
UsAgainstAlzheimer's  
U.S. Breastfeeding Committee

Utah Pacific Islander Civic Engagement Coalition  
Washington State Department of Health  
West Michigan Asian American Association Inc  
West Valley Neighborhoods Coalition  
Women's Mountain Passages  
YMCA of the USA  
YO MAMA LLC  
Zero Breast Cancer