

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 20th 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 20th 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