



**Public health program funding is critical for the prevention and treatment of numerous chronic diseases.**

January 3, 2020

The Honorable Andrew M. Cuomo  
 Governor of New York State  
 NYS State Capitol Building  
 Albany, NY 12224

Governor Cuomo,

As organizations committed to encouraging healthier lifestyles and reducing the risks associated with chronic diseases, we respectfully request that the FY 2020-2021 Executive Budget refrain from both combining legislative appropriations for the many important health programs in a pooled appropriation and issuing cuts to the funding. Any reduction in funding to these already underfunded programs would have drastic impacts for the health of New Yorkers. As organizations united to promote and protect the health of communities, we oppose cuts to public health funding in any form.

In recent years past, important health programs benefitting millions of New Yorkers have been either threatened with cuts or held to level funding. Included in this consolidation are programs that reduce the morbidity and mortality of chronic diseases, including funding for the state’s Hypertension Program, Obesity and Diabetes Programs, and Asthma Program. The cuts have also targeted maternal and child health programs, rural Health Networks, workforce programs, adult care facilities and enriched housing programs serving elderly and disabled individuals,

Area Health Education Centers which promote primary care and public health careers to students in underserved communities, the Physically Handicapped Children's program, and community-based programs focused on improving health outcomes.

As a proponent for public health, you know the importance of encouraging healthier lifestyles and supporting prevention and screening to reduce risks of chronic diseases. Chronic diseases—such as heart disease, cancer, diabetes, stroke, and asthma -- are the leading causes of disability and death in New York State. More than 40% of New York adults suffer from a chronic disease and six out of every 10 deaths in New York State are caused by one of these diseases. New Yorkers cannot afford to live without these vital health programs. Moreover, many of these programs disproportionately impact low income populations. Removing access to vital preventative health services for these communities perpetuates these health disparities. This is unjust.

Many of these state health interventions being considered for consolidation exist to prevent, reduce, or delay much of the chronic disease burden. Others exist to improve the health and wellbeing of New York's mothers and children. Preventing chronic diseases like heart disease and protecting and promoting the health of pregnant women and babies are smart investments for New York State. Enriched housing programs provide an environment for seniors to stay mobile, active, safe and healthy. Threats to sustainable funding for these programs are not only harmful but are in direct opposition to one of the objectives of the New York State Health Innovation Plan. New York's commitment to promote health at the community level is directly linked to these programs. It is counterintuitive to reduce funding for efforts that improve health and disease prevention.

There are many other sources for revenue for the state of New York, the budget shortfall should not be resolved on the back of our essential public health infrastructure, primary care to underserved populations, and child and elderly residents of the State. Our respective organizations each ask for the retention of the separate appropriations for the above programs as well as adequate funding so important health interventions can continue in the upcoming year.

Sincerely,

The above-mentioned organizations

CC:

Paul Francis, Assistant Secretary for Health and Human Services;  
Dr. Howard Zucker, Commissioner of Department of Health;  
Megan Baldwin, Assistant Secretary for Health, New York State Executive Chamber;  
Robert Mujica, Director of Division of Budget  
Frank Walsh, Chief Budget Examiner, Division of Budget  
Bradley Hutton, Deputy Director, New York State Department of Health

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