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Asthma and Allergy Foundation of America



Children's Environmental Health Network



CLIMATE for HEALTH™



March 22, 2019

The Honorable Rosa DeLauro, Chair
Labor, Health and Human Services, Education
and Related Agencies Subcommittee
Committee on Appropriations
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable, Tom Cole, Ranking Member
Labor, Health and Human Services, Education and
Related Agencies Subcommittee
Committee on Appropriations
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

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

The Honorable Patty Murray, Ranking Member
Labor, Health and Human Services, Education and
Related Agencies Subcommittee
Committee on Appropriations
U.S. Senate
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. This funding is critical for helping state and local health departments prepare and protect their communities from the health impacts of 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, three tribes and three territories (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. 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
American College of Physicians
American Lung Association
American Public Health Association
Association of Schools and Programs of Public Health
Asthma and Allergy Foundation of America
Center for Climate Change and 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
Physicians for Social Responsibility