

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

The Honorable Patty Murray
Ranking Member
Subcommittee on Labor, Health and Human
Services, Education, and Related Agencies
Committee on Appropriations
U.S. Senate
Washington, DC 20510

April 18, 2018

Dear Chair Blunt and Ranking Member Murray:

We would like to express our appreciation and thanks for the funding support for lead poisoning prevention and healthy homes in the Fiscal Year 2018 omnibus bill passed last month. In particular, we applaud the increase from \$17 million to \$35 million for the Childhood Lead Poisoning Prevention Program at the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC).

As you consider the Fiscal Year 2019 funding bill, we urge you to continue to support the vital work of this program and further increase funding to \$50 million. We also urge increased funding for the National Environmental Health Tracking Network from \$34 million to \$40 million, and funding for the National Asthma Control Program at \$30 million.

Across the country, millions of families are living in unhealthy housing conditions, struggling with issues like broken heating and plumbing systems, damaged or leaking roofs, mold, exposed wiring, and toxic chemicals. Overall, forty percent of U.S. homes have at least one significant health or safety risk that places American families at risk.

While the percentage of children tested with high blood lead has decreased over 90% in the past twenty years, 535,000 children still have blood lead levels above the CDC reference value. The CDC's Childhood Lead Poisoning Prevention Program currently provides grants to 39 states and 10 cities or counties. It conducts needed surveillance of children exposed to lead, provides national data on childhood lead poisoning, ensures that children receive necessary case management, and enables local jurisdictions to take action before children are exposed to lead instead of reacting only after they have been harmed. Screening and surveillance data currently provide the foundation for targeting community prevention activities to areas where the risk is highest and increasing funding for this program to \$50 million will allow this program to offer increased surveillance grants to more states.

CDC's National Environmental Public Health Tracking Program supports environmental public health tracking and data networks in 25 states and one city. These program has 20 datasets, 107 indicators, and 419 health measures ranging from asthma to drinking water quality and carbon monoxide exposure. To date, state and local health officials have used the Tracking Network over 225 times to prevent sickness and death. Increased funding for this program from \$34 to \$40 million would allow the program to fund three additional states.

CDC's National Asthma Control Program funds states, localities, and other organizations to improve asthma surveillance, awareness, and education. Since its inception, the program has supported asthma control programs in 34 states, the District of Columbia, and Puerto Rico; asthma death rates have decreased by 27%; and costs due to asthma illness and death have decreased by \$23.1 billion. Funding this program at \$30 million will allow the CDC to continue this important work.

The National Safe and Healthy Housing Coalition is a broad, voluntary coalition of over 300 organizations working to improve housing conditions nationwide. The coalition promotes policies for safe and healthy housing in the United States, with special emphasis on those who are disproportionately impacted. Congress has an obligation protect the most vulnerable of its citizens, its children, and the elderly, and that is what this funding does. These vital programs must continue to be fully funded in order to support healthy housing for all.

Thank you for your consideration of our request and for your continued support of lead poisoning prevention and healthy homes.

Sincerely,

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