

## The Nation Needs to Invest in Public Health Now

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Every day in communities across the nation, our public health system and public health workforce are striving to help everyone get and stay healthy. Our public health workforce has worked overtime during the COVID-19 pandemic to protect our communities, and while we are grateful for the temporary emergency funding provided by Congress to help state and local health departments, we know that we must ensure our public health system and workforce have adequate funding: we must be prepared for the next public health emergency.

Over the last decade, [federal funding for public health programs and agencies has fallen](#). In fiscal year 2021, only 4.4% of federal health spending went toward public health.

Federal spending makes a big difference. In addition to ensuring state and local health departments have funding to address public health emergencies like COVID-19, federal funding for public health goes toward solving community problems like preventing childhood lead poisoning, reducing maternal and infant mortality, curbing tobacco use, and lowering obesity rates.

According to the American Public Health Association's *Speak for Health* data sheets, Delaware receives \$111 per person in funding from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and the Health Resources Services Administration (HRSA), ranking the state 17th in the nation. The Prevention and Public Health Fund awarded Delaware \$7.28 million in grants for community and clinical prevention efforts, and improvements to public health infrastructure in the 2020 fiscal year. Since then, significant additional funding has come to Delaware through the American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA), the CDC, and the Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA).

Robust funding for the public health system is essential to protecting the health of our communities, saving lives, and reducing costs in the health care system. The future of our nation's health depends on a strong and properly equipped public health infrastructure at the community level — in Delaware, and in cities and towns across the country.

As the leading voice for public health in our country, the American Public Health Association has sounded the alarm on inadequate public health funding. If we fail to act now and truly invest in public health, our communities will suffer. Congress must increase annual funding for key public health agencies like the CDC, HRSA and the National Institutes of Health (NIH), and maintain existing and future funding available through the Prevention and Public Health Fund. Every dollar invested today will go toward the future of our country's health.

We support efforts to provide sustained and long-term additional annual funding for the CDC— as well as state, local, tribal, and territorial core public health infrastructure—to modernize the nation's public health system, rebuild the workforce and promote healthier communities. In the Senate, Senator Patty Murray has introduced the Public Health Infrastructure Saves Lives Act, which would establish a program to annually fund public health infrastructure. We urge

Congress to include this important legislation in the infrastructure legislation that is currently being developed.

It is time our nation's health is made a priority. For our Delaware delegation in Washington, DC, the message is clear: your continued commitment to increasing investments in public health is fundamental to our pursuit of becoming a healthy nation.

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