June 3, 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 organizations and communities working to ensure that healthy opportunities are available to all individuals regardless of race, ethnicity, or socioeconomic status, we are writing to urge you to include $76.95 million in the Senate FY 2020 Labor, Health and Human Services, and Education Appropriations bill for the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention’s (CDC) Racial and Ethnic Approaches to Community Health (REACH) program. REACH is one of the only community health programs funded by the CDC that is specifically dedicated to fund urban, rural, and tribal communities working to lessen and eliminate racial and ethnic health disparities.

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. Investing directly in community coalitions with a history of tackling these issues allows the time and resources necessary to address the many root causes of racial and ethnic disparities and reverse the upward trend of chronic disease.

The REACH program is singularly advancing community-level strategies that work to eliminate racial and ethnic health disparities in chronic disease and related risk factors. CDC currently funds 31 recipients 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 650,000 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, and since FY2017, REACH has been reduced in order to fund the valuable Good Health and Wellness in Indian Country (GHWIC) 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 links with American Indian/Native American populations. This is why we are urging Congress to restore REACH funding in FY 2020 and continue to fund GHWIC which requires a total allocation of $76.95 million. We are thankful that the House recommended FY 20 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 2018 funding cycle, including organizations representing a diverse set of racial and ethnic minority groups.

As REACH celebrates its 20th anniversary we urge you to invest in these REACH and GHWIC communities to improve health outcomes and address disparities. Thank you in advance 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
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
Micronesian 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
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)  
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 National Association of Community Health Centers  
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