

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

October 8, 2020

The Honorable Nancy Pelosi
Speaker of the House
U.S. House of Representatives
H-232, U.S. Capitol
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Kevin McCarthy
Minority Leader
U.S. House of Representatives
H-204, U.S. Capitol
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Speaker Pelosi and Minority Leader McCarthy,

Congress has gone to great lengths to support health care providers and public health professionals during the COVID-19 pandemic. Local health departments have been on the frontlines of fighting the COVID pandemic. They are the ones administering COVID tests, promoting safety guidelines, conducting contact tracing and who will eventually distribute a vaccine and answer the public's questions on its safety.

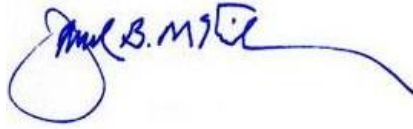
Local health departments are attempting to prepare for fighting this pandemic for the foreseeable future. In addition, the upcoming flu season likely will put additional strain on an already strained public health and health care system. In the CARES Act, Congress allocated billions of dollars for public health through the Centers for Disease Control (CDC), Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA), and other Health and Human Services (HHS) agencies. However, the funding has barely trickled into many local public health agencies from CDC through state health departments, resulting in a patchwork of protection across the nation. Some local health departments have not gotten any federal support for their coronavirus response, while others have gotten so little that they could not even support the hiring of one full time employee.

At the same time, local health departments continue to deliver their other non-COVID public health services including immunizations, food safety, and risk mitigation. Additionally, due to the economic impacts of the virus on local and state tax dollars, some local health departments are being asked to plan for upwards of 25% budget reductions, while furloughs are already taking place.

Congress should prioritize local health departments in the next COVID package. We are requesting a dedicated funding line for county, city, and tribal health departments in the next COVID stimulus package to be allocated through CDC. This would help ensure resources reach the front line of the response in a timely manner and allow these departments to continue their work of promoting public health and safety.

Thank you for your attention to these matters.

Sincerely,



David B. McKinley P.E.
Member of Congress



Debbie Dingell
Member of Congress



Roger Marshall, M.D.
Member of Congress



Jimmy Panetta
Member of Congress



Kathy Castor
Member of Congress



Brian Fitzpatrick
Member of Congress



Mark Pocan
Member of Congress



Gwen Moore
Member of Congress

Bill Foster

Bill Foster
Member of Congress

Juan Vargas

Juan Vargas
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Bobby L. Rush

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Member of Congress

Dave Loebsack

Dave Loebsack
Member of Congress

Robin L. Kelly

Robin L. Kelly
Member of Congress

Lisa Blunt Rochester

Lisa Blunt Rochester
Member of Congress

Tony Cárdenas

Tony Cárdenas
Member of Congress