

National Headquarters
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January 25, 2018

The Honorable Alex Azar
Secretary
HHS
200 Independence Ave., SW
Humphrey Bldg.
Washington, DC 20201

The Honorable Jerome Adams
Office of the Surgeon General
HHS
200 Independence Ave. SW
Humphrey Bldg. Suite 701H
Washington, DC 20201

Dear Secretary Azar and Dr. Adams:

In response to the President's public health emergency declaration for the opioid epidemic and the final report of the President's Commission on Combatting Drug Addiction and the Opioid Crisis, as public health leaders we respectfully ask that you work with the Administration to seek additional resources to expand and strengthen state and territorial public health capacity to respond to the opioid crisis. State and territorial health agencies are on the front lines of responding to the current crisis of substance misuse, addiction, and drug overdose. Major federal investments in treatment and recovery should also be complemented with funding for prevention. Preventing individuals from using opioids or other illicit substances in the first place is the best way to end our nation's epidemic.

Therefore, the undersigned state and territorial health officials request that the Administration propose to Congress **\$1 billion in emergency supplemental funding** to be spent during fiscal years 2018 and 2019 by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), as well as state and territorial health departments and local partners, to perform the following activities: improve monitoring and surveillance, expand and strengthen evidence-based prevention and education strategies, manage access to opioids, and improve access to and use of effective treatment recovery and support.

This supplemental funding, which will spur critical activities to rapidly respond to the opioid epidemic, does not preclude the need for Congress to provide sustained, continued, and increased investments in CDC, SAMHSA, or other agencies at HHS to continue to address the ongoing opioid epidemic through research, treatment, and other activities. We also believe that this funding should not be offset by cutting other public health programs.

It is important to note that this \$1 billion emergency supplemental request represents the most pressing *public health prevention needs*. It is a building block to begin to better help states and territories address the opioid crisis. We certainly hope that it garners bipartisan support and is included as part of a larger comprehensive effort to address areas such as treatment, workforce

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staffing and training, research, and issues related to special populations, such as neonatal abstinence syndrome and many other facets.

We look forward to working with the Administration and Congress to address this national epidemic which is spreading through our communities, disrupting families and workplaces, and sadly leading to thousands of preventable, premature deaths.

Enclosed is additional information on the Association of State and Territorial Health Officials' (ASTHO) funding proposal and a summary of the recently released Public Health Framework for Preventing Opioid Misuse in States and Territories. For additional information, please contact ASTHO Chief of Government Affairs and Public Relations Carolyn Mullen at cmullen@astho.org.

Sincerely,

Jay C. Butler, MD
Director of Public Health
Alaska Department of Health and Social Services

Karyl T. Rattay, MD, MS
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Assistant Secretary
Office of Public Health
Louisiana Department of Health

Cc: Kellyanne Conway, Counselor to the President, the White House
Daniel Barber, Associate Director of External Affairs, HHS