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@ASTHO

October 1, 2020

The Honorable Mitch McConnell
Majority Leader
The Capitol, S-230
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Nancy Pelosi
Speaker
The Capitol, H-232
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Charles E. Schumer
Minority Leader
The Capitol, S-221
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Kevin McCarthy
Minority Leader
The Capitol, H-204
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Speaker Pelosi, Majority Leader McConnell, Minority Leader McCarthy, and Minority Leader Schumer:

On behalf of the Association of State and Territorial Health Officials (ASTHO) we are writing in support of the proposed public health emergency supplemental funding provided in the updated version of the Heroes Act that was released by the House of Representatives on September 28, 2020. While we are grateful for the previous emergency supplemental bills which provided resources for federal, state, territorial, and local health agencies to address the ongoing COVID-19 response additional emergency supplemental funding dedicated to public health is needed as soon as possible.

The revised Heroes Act acknowledges the essential role of governmental public health in this response and especially the urgent need to support the national vaccine distribution effort. Specifically, the \$13.7 billion provided in the bill that is directed to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention will allow state and territorial public health departments to support “the last mile” of the remarkable investment in the development of a vaccine against SARS-CoV-2. Additionally, funding for a public awareness campaign and the enhanced seasonal influenza campaign will bolster efforts to ensure the best possible uptake of both the influenza and SARS-CoV-2 vaccines. ASTHO also supports additional resources for testing, contact tracing, and other activities necessary to effectively monitor and suppress COVID-19.

ASTHO urges expeditious bipartisan agreement on emergency supplemental funding so that state, territorial, local, and tribal health departments receive urgently needed resources to conduct a successful COVID-19 vaccination and influenza campaign, while simultaneously administering other critical front-line public health work to protect the American people.

We look forward to continuing our work with Congress to address this devastating pandemic. For additional information, please contact Carolyn McCoy, ASTHO’s senior director of government affairs, at cmccoy@astho.org.

Sincerely,



Michael Fraser, PhD, MS, CAE, FCPP
Chief Executive Officer
Association of State and Territorial Health Officials