



October 17, 2018

**Association of State and
Territorial Health Officials**

National Headquarters

2231 Crystal Drive
Suite 450
Arlington, VA 22202
(202) 371-9090

Regional Office

600 Peachtree Street NE
Suite 1000
Atlanta, GA 30308
(202) 371-9090

www.astho.org
@ASTHO

Robert Kadlec, MD
Assistant Secretary for Preparedness and Response
US Department of Health and Human Services
200 Independence Avenue, SW, Room 638-G
Washington, DC 20201

Dear Dr. Kadlec,

I regret that our paths did not cross at this week's annual meeting of the Directors of Public Health Preparedness (DPHP) but I received great feedback on your keynote remarks, your personal interaction with the DPHP Executive Committee during lunch on Tuesday, and the moment-to-moment interaction between the preparedness directors and your key staff who were in attendance. Thank you!

ASTHO values its collaboration with ASPR and is proud of the work we accomplished together through our cooperative agreements and contractual agreements over the years. Our shared vision and mission make an ongoing partnership essential as we work to continue to improve the nation's readiness for health emergencies. As we enter the second year of our current cooperative agreement, we understand that a preliminary decision has been made not to provide continuation funding to ASTHO for the year ahead. This is quite worrisome to us and will be detrimental to our ability to contribute in any meaningful way to efforts to advance our common goals and your planned initiatives were we feel ASTHO's involvement is important and necessary.

ASTHO will complete the following FY 18 (YR 1) work plan tasks and deliverables with existing resources:

- **National Emergency Management Association Survey**
- **National Association of Boards of Pharmacy Survey**
- **Vulnerable Populations Toolkit**
- **Drug Shortages Mitigation Guide Refresh**
- **October 15, 2018 Directors of Public Health Preparedness (DPHP) Listening Session**

However, absent any continuation funding for the second year of the cooperative agreement which began several weeks ago, we will have little to no bandwidth to participate in, or conduct any important activities and services. These would certainly include:

- **ASPR support of the DPHP Peer Group.** As ASTHO's primary linkage to the HPP awardees, the DPHP and their Executive Committee serve as the primary consultative body for the state and territorial based preparedness programs, serves as a primary means for peer-to-peer interaction and support, and has typically been jointly supported by ASPR and CDC since it covers both HPP and PHEP.



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- **HPP activities and projects.** One prime example is the Peer Assessments of Emergency Responses (as have been done previously with the Orlando Pulse Night Club shooting and the Las Vegas 1 October shooting) to assess the use and impact of HPP funding and resources.
- **Assistance in implementation and assessment of ASPR initiatives.** This would include implementation of the National Biodefense Strategy, revision of the National Health Security Strategy, planning for repatriation of citizens following disasters, the MCM Last Mile Initiative, implications of the transfer of the Strategic National Stockpile to ASPR, engagement of State stakeholders in the PHEMCE, and the Regional Disaster Response System Pilot.
- **Enhanced involvement with the HPH CIP GCC.** In the past two years ASTHO has played an increased role in a range of incident responses such as natural disasters, cyber threats, and product shortages as part of the Healthcare and Public Health Critical Infrastructure Sector. Key ASTHO staff just participated in last week's GCC/SCC Pandemic Influenza exercise and the classified briefing held just this Monday where suggestions for future actions emerged indicating the need for ongoing collaboration between ASTHO and ASPR. ASTHO continues to play a significant role representing the needs of public health agencies and amplifying ASPR's communication messages.
- **Ongoing participation in and contribution to the National Academy of Medicine Preparedness Forum.** ASTHO is a charter member of the Forum with active participation. Just recently, Jim Blumenstock served as the co-chair of the NAS planning committee for and co-chaired the proceedings of the work shop on Exploring Medical and Public Health Preparedness for a Nuclear Event."
- **On-going and "Stand-Ready" ASPR Mission Support.** ASPR has many programs that impact ASTHO's members. These programs enhance their abilities to prepared for and respond to emergencies. ASTHO welcomes the opportunity to become more actively involved to support ASTHO and our members such as promoting greater use of EmPower, maintaining and operationalizing official LNO status with the SOC, etc. For example, just next week alone, Jim Blumenstock and/or other key staff was invited and plans to attend the NAS Med Prep Forum meeting with you to discuss private sector capacity, nuclear preparedness, and medical supply shortages (Monday); the External Stakeholders' Engagement Session (Tuesday), and the National Summit for Bioincident Recovery (Friday).

Unfortunately, without additional resources we will be forced to seriously curtail and even discontinue activities and will not be able to begin to address new matters in support of ASPR that would also result in capacity building/technical assistance support to our members. The current absence of year two funding for our ASPR cooperative agreement comes at a particularly difficult time for ASTHO since we are also experiencing funding reductions from CDC and DHS. This leaves us with very limited capacity to respond to future disasters and other public health emergencies and to contribute to discussion and implementation of key health security policies and strategies on the horizon.



In order to provide continuing support and assistance to ASPR that will also benefit our members and the practice community as a whole, ASTHO requests consideration of awarding \$250,000 for year two of our cooperative agreement. ASTHO can readily submit a detailed work plan and budget in support of this request and welcomes the opportunity to discuss proposed activities.

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We thank you very much for considering this request and as you do so, please feel free to reach out to Jim Blumenstock, ASTHO's Chief of Health Security, or Gerrit Bakker, ASTHO's Senior Director for Preparedness, should you have any questions or require additional detail.

Again, thank you for your partnership and I look forward to our next contact.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "M Fraser". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal line extending to the right.

Michael Fraser, PhD MS CAE FCPP
Chief Executive Officer

C: Jennifer Alton
Kevin Yeskey
Jack Herrmann
Jennifer Hannah
Jim Blumenstock
Gerrit Bakker