



For Immediate Release

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Public Health Coalition Says Workforce Funding in May Revision Will Save Lives, Build Equity

Praises Governor's Reversal on Workforce Funding Cuts

SACRAMENTO, CA — California Can't Wait, a coalition of public health officials, local leaders, frontline workers, and health equity advocates applauded Governor Gavin Newsom for responding to the urgency of our public health workforce crisis, reversing course from a January state budget proposal to slash \$49.8M in Public Health Equity and Readiness Opportunity (PublicHERO) workforce development and training funds.

"California's local public health officials thank Governor Newsom for recognizing that waiting until a crisis to invest in our public health workforce has disastrous consequences," said **Michelle Gibbons, Executive Director, County Health Executives Association of California.**

"These crucial one-time investments in our future public health workforce pipeline will develop the next generation of public health professionals who will save lives by addressing social determinants of health, preventing disease, and making progress toward our health equity goals."

Since January when Newsom proposed eliminating the one-time PublicHERO funds, advocates have warned that California can't wait to develop and train the next generation of frontline public health heroes. Likewise, Assembly and Senate Budget Subcommittees had cautioned that these funds are urgently needed to rebuild our decimated public health workforce to protect communities from the next public health crisis.

“SEIU workers applaud Governor Newsom’s recognition that a healthy California for All requires a strong public health workforce,” said **David Green, President of SEIU Local 721 and SEIU California Executive Board Member**. “Public health workers were the unsung heroes of the COVID-19 pandemic and beyond. They reach deep into their communities to prevent chronic disease before it starts, give children from marginalized communities the chance to grow up healthy, and respond early before a public health problem becomes a crisis. A strong, diverse and organized public health workforce keeps us all safer.”

“Investments in public health will save lives not just this year, but for decades to come,” said **Kat DeBurgh, Executive Director of the Health Officers Association of California**. “Local health departments work to prevent diseases across the spectrum, from infectious diseases like COVID-19 to chronic conditions like heart disease. The expenditure is one-time but the dividends will be ongoing.”

“We are pleased that Governor Newsom has preserved funding for public health workforce training,” said **Harold Goldstein, Executive Director of Public Health Advocates**. “This is the right thing to do, and it shows the Governor is willing to listen to advocates as part of the process. We are hopeful the Governor will remain focused on protecting public health and incorporating the perspectives of advocates throughout the legislative session.”

The Governor’s May Revise also protects \$300M ongoing funding the California Can’t Wait Coalition secured in FY 22-23 to begin to rebuild our local and state public health infrastructure. The coalition praised the maintenance of these urgently needed investments and thanked Senate and Assembly leaders for their strong statements of support for public health investment. In budget hearings, Senate and Assembly Budget subcommittee members called for prioritizing public health workforce investments noting they are essential as our frontline of defense against disease and illness.

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