

WE STAND WITH PUBLIC HEALTH: A CALL TO ACTION

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Now more than ever, the United States needs a strong public health system. Compounding challenges must be met with science, community engagement, collaboration, and a commitment to equity. This is the moment for all to come together to appreciate the critical work of public health.

Stop the harassment of the public health workforce

Harassment has added to the already immense pressure public health officials are experiencing as they do their jobs to prevent illness and death.

- 1. SPEAK OUT.** Everyone—especially elected officials and community leaders—should endorse this statement:

“It is the job of public health agencies to protect the health of their communities. In a democracy, dialogue is necessary and disagreement is inevitable, but there is no place for threats and harassment. Public health workers should be treated with respect for their work on behalf of us all. I stand with public health.”

- 2. REPORT THREATS.** Congress should require state and local monitoring and reporting to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention of threats and harassment against public health workers for performing their official duties. This includes threats related to race, religion, sexual orientation, or gender.
- 3. USE THE LAW TO DETER AND PROTECT.** State and local prosecutors and law enforcement leaders should utilize [existing statutes](#), as well as support new laws as needed, to protect public health officials from threats and harassment.

Reject efforts to sideline public health

In the midst of a worldwide pandemic, it has never been more important to make decisions informed by science.

- 4. DO NOT LOSE GROUND.** It is important to defend the statutory authority of state and local public health agencies. In a crisis, public health measures protect communities against widespread illness and death.

Revitalize public health agencies

We must break the cycle of boom-and-bust funding of governmental public health, where investments during a crisis are quickly eroded when the crisis fades.

- 5. REBUILD THE INFRASTRUCTURE.** Many health departments are facing personnel shortages and are forced to rely on outdated and fragmented systems and infrastructure. A major federal investment in public health infrastructure at all levels is essential to identifying and responding to public health challenges in real time.
 - Invest in the workforce:** The Biden Administration has proposed funding for [100,000 new public health workers](#) to aid in COVID-19 response. The federal government should sustain this investment and expand scholarships, [loan repayment programs](#), and other funding to recruit and retain a diverse and effective public health workforce to protect the nation.
 - Modernize data systems:** Full funding for implementation of [CDC’s Public Health Data Modernization Initiative](#) will upgrade critical systems and technology, facilitate electronic data transmission, and enable interoperable data exchange.

STAND WITH PUBLIC HEALTH. SPEAK OUT. ENDORSE THE CALL TO ACTION:
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