

Dear President Trump:

As organizations representing physicians, public health, scientists, allied health professionals, patients and advocates, we urge you to be mindful of the essential role of the federal public health and biomedical research workforce as you consider long-term policy regarding federal hiring. We are encouraged by reports that jobs that respond to public health and medical emergencies (such as the opioid epidemic, pandemic influenza, Ebola and Zika), as well as jobs related to food, drug and medical device safety are exempt from the current federal hiring freeze, and we appreciate your recognition that these jobs are essential to public safety and national security. We ask that the long-term federal hiring strategy reflect the need for a strong workforce not only to respond to public health emergencies, but throughout the public health continuum to help prevent them, to protect the public from ongoing health threats, and to promote healthy communities.

Maintaining public health workforce capacity before an emergency occurs is necessary to ensure that an emergency is rapidly and accurately identified and that an effective response is triggered swiftly. Public health experts at the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) take the lead in preparedness and response activities for major national and global public health emergencies, as well as for everyday threats including foodborne illness. CDC staff also lead important efforts to prevent serious illnesses, including HIV/AIDS and other infectious diseases, antimicrobial resistant infections, heart disease, diabetes and many other diseases that pose a serious threat to public safety.

The healthcare and services, health workforce and health centers supported by the Health Resources and Services Administration in communities across the country are the first line of defense in preventing, detecting and responding to public health outbreaks and natural disasters at the local level. HRSA programs and staff working with other federal partners are critical to ensuring frontline capacity to manage public health emergencies. HRSA helps local service providers and health centers to be ready to respond through emergency preparedness and steps in during times of need, such as to support services for women and their babies affected by Zika and to control the HIV and hepatitis C outbreaks in Scott County, Indiana.

Biomedical research and public health go hand in hand. During an outbreak, public health responders need tools like vaccines, diagnostics and therapeutics to save lives. We rely upon the National Institutes of Health to lead this critical research. While over 80% of NIH funding is awarded to external researchers, researchers at NIH conduct groundbreaking research on diseases and conditions that pose serious threats to public safety, including cancer, birth defects and infectious diseases. Further, NIH staff provide important coordination and support for more than 300,000 researchers at more than 2,500 universities, medical schools, and other research institutions.

Finally, staff at the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) are necessary to ensure the safety, efficacy and availability of life-saving therapeutics and devices to respond to pandemics, bioterror attacks and other public health emergencies, as well as more routine threats to public safety, including a host of serious diseases and conditions. In addition, FDA's staff plays an

essential role in ensuring the safety of our food supply, including helping to prevent foodborne illness.

Once again, we thank you for recognizing the essential role of the federal workforce in responding to public health emergencies and the recognition that many public health and biomedical research jobs are critical to protecting public safety and national security. Moving forward, we look forward to working with you to protect and strengthen the workforce across the public health continuum. We would welcome the opportunity to help inform your longer term federal hiring policies.

Sincerely