



**Association of
American Medical Colleges**

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July 11, 2023

The Honorable Patty Murray
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Senator Murray:

On behalf of the Association of American Medical Colleges (AAMC), I write to thank you for reintroducing the Public Health Infrastructure Saves Lives Act. The AAMC is pleased to support this important legislation to promote better health for all by investing in public health infrastructure at health departments across the country.

The AAMC (Association of American Medical Colleges) is a nonprofit association dedicated to improving the health of people everywhere through medical education, health care, medical research, and community collaborations. Its members are all 157 U.S. medical schools accredited by the Liaison Committee on Medical Education; 13 accredited Canadian medical schools; approximately 400 teaching hospitals and health systems, including Department of Veterans Affairs medical centers; and more than 70 academic societies. Through these institutions and organizations, the AAMC leads and serves America's medical schools and teaching hospitals and the millions of individuals across academic medicine, including more than 193,000 full-time faculty members, 96,000 medical students, 153,000 resident physicians, and 60,000 graduate students and postdoctoral researchers in the biomedical sciences. Following a 2022 merger, the Alliance of Academic Health Centers and the Alliance of Academic Health Centers International broadened the AAMC's U.S. membership and expanded its reach to international academic health centers.

Regrettably, decades of underfunding at the local, state, and national levels have substantially undermined the nation's public health infrastructure, a trend that must be reversed permanently. To date, the federal funding strategy for public health primarily has favored a crisis-response approach over robust, sustained investment, and fiscal challenges at the state and local level have further compounded the pressures on health departments nationwide. Consequently, foundational public health capabilities have been strained at almost every level, as looming and ongoing threats far outpace available resources, leaving our country ill-equipped to respond. This pattern only serves to undercut future opportunities to strengthen the agencies' efforts.

Your legislation would provide critical support to recover some of this lost capacity and to stabilize investment over the long-term. By providing dedicated, reliable funding to augment annual federal

appropriations, the bill would enable health departments to address core infrastructure needs, from bolstering public health surveillance and lab capacity, modernizing and enhancing communications infrastructure, to implementing strategies that advance equity.

To operate most optimally, the nation's health care system – including our member teaching hospitals, health systems, and their affiliated medical school faculty – relies on a healthy public health infrastructure. Every individual benefits from a strong commitment to this goal. As legislative efforts move forward, we would welcome the opportunity to discuss how also to better enhance linkages between public health and health care, and academic medical centers in particular.

Thank you again, and we look forward to continuing to work with you on this important legislation.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Danielle P. Turnipseed". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Danielle Turnipseed, JD, MHSA, MPP
AAMC Chief Public Policy Officer