



National Environmental Health Association

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U.S. spends more than any other high-income nation on healthcare per capita, with worse outcomes. Chronic diseases are the leading causes of death and disability and, along with mental health conditions, account for an estimated [90 percent](#) of total healthcare costs. Core public health prevention activities performed within every SLTT public health agency, activities such as food safety, drinking water and waste water, and vaccinations, receive little federal support yet save more lives than many other activities. To reduce future health spending, Congress must invest in prevention and public health activities throughout the CDC.



SLTT investments into public health from federal block grants better reflect the public health needs of a state, or a local, tribal or territorial community. The SLTT officials face public health   
 e a d a d e d e c e c concerns, whether it be the implementation of a public health policy or regulation, the impact a policy has on the regulated community or public, or the lack of resources to combat an emerging public health concern. These officials have the best sense of where public health financial resources should be spent.

However, the federal government too often forgoes any metrics to determine if the measure these officials take produce the desired results. As the CDC improves its data and surveillance, it must perform legal epidemiology to determine which policies work, which SLTT jurisdictions measures   
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For the CDC to meet its mission, its authority must be clarified and strengthened, for it to understand and respect the extent of public health response and guidance that Congress has delegated to the CDC. The CDC should be able to make demands to limit or eliminate a pandemic or any public health threat. Clear authorizations from Congress are needed.

This lack of direct authorization and being a small subset of the larger Health and Human Services (HHS) Secretariat, the CDC has suffered from years of underfunding. Many CDC programs have not received the resources that are needed to address the many public health challenges this nation faces, nor the demands placed on it by Congress. This results in many of CDC's ineffective programs in most SLTT jurisdictions. SLTT public health agencies rely on CDC for guidance, direction and resources, and direly need these resources to best protect the public from public health threats. The cost of prevention is miniscule compared to the cost of treating the disease.

The CDC Foundation provides an independent outlet for CDC to act on those public health threats that neither Congress nor HHS funds. Its role is vital in addressing novel and emerging health threats. Without the independent funding from the CDC Foundation, the CDC will be forced to rely on Congressional appropriations to react to disease outbreaks and emergencies.



NEHA applauds this effort by Congress to improve the CDC, and looks forward to working with your staff on this vital issue.

In Health,

