



# County of Monterey

ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICE

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May 28, 2024

The Honorable Scott Weiner  
Chair, Senate Budget & Fiscal Review  
1021 O Street, Room 8620  
Sacramento, CA 95814

The Honorable Jesse Gabriel  
Chair, Assembly Budget  
1021 O Street, Room 8230  
Sacramento, CA 95814

The Honorable Caroline Menjivar  
Chair, Senate Budget Sub #3  
1021 O Street, Room 6720  
Sacramento, CA 95814

The Honorable Akilah Weber, M.D.  
Chair, Assembly Budget Sub #1  
1021 O Street, Suite 4130  
Sacramento, CA 95814

## **Re: Governor's Proposal to Eliminate \$300 Million Future of Public Health (FoPH) - OPPOSE**

Dear Senators Weiner and Menjivar and Assemblymembers Gabriel and Weber,

The County of Monterey opposes the Governor's May Revision budget proposal to eliminate the \$300 million ongoing General Fund Future of Public Health investment, with \$200 million dedicated to local health department workforce and infrastructure and \$100 million dedicated to the state public health department. We additionally oppose the Administration's proposal to eliminate \$52.5 million in Future of Public Health funds in the current fiscal year.

Local health departments, supported by a well-trained workforce, are the first line of defense against public health threats. The elimination of \$300 million, of which \$200 million is dedicated to local health departments for workforce, infrastructure, prevention, infectious disease control, and emergency preparedness activities, would have a negative impact on counties. Such a significant reduction, just as counties are effectively rebuilding capacity after the pandemic (more than 900 positions have been filled utilizing these funds) will make it extremely difficult to adequately respond to emerging public health needs. We respectfully request consideration of the potentially greater future costs and long-term impacts associated with the elimination of these critical investments.

We must acknowledge the lessons learned from the COVID-19 pandemic, especially that local health departments are instrumental in protecting lives, ensuring health equity, and avoiding excess social and economic disruption. Our local health departments are the first line of defense against all public health threats and rely on a highly skilled and specialized workforce.

Even before the pandemic, public health departments faced significant workforce challenges. Fewer than one in six graduates from schools of public health go on to work in governmental public health and nationwide public health lost roughly 50,000 jobs after the Great Recession. The COVID-19 pandemic exacerbated these challenges as public health workers have grappled with burnout and harassment, while also being heavily recruited by other sectors.

Through the 2022 Budget Act, California took a transformational step toward improving our state and local public health departments by investing \$300 million ongoing General Fund in public health workforce and infrastructure. \$200 million of this investment is dedicated to local health departments, resulting in the creation of nearly 1,200 new staff positions statewide. At least 70 percent of allocations to jurisdictions must be used to support the expansion of permanent public health staff positions.

Local health departments have hired staff in areas including but not limited to chronic diseases and community health, infectious disease prevention and control, communications, emergency preparedness and response, family health, public health laboratories, and environmental health. Local



health departments have hired staff based on community health needs identified through community health assessments, community health improvement plans, or department strategic plans. The County of Monterey Health Department receives about \$2.6 million dollars and has hired 14 new full time specialized individuals in the areas of public health epidemiology, chronic disease and injury prevention, public health laboratory services, environmental health, and preparedness who have been instrumental in advancing local communicable disease surveillance and investigation efforts, public health laboratory practices and efficiencies, healthy aging programming, and healthy housing initiatives.

Eliminating this funding would have serious and detrimental impacts to local health department services and operations, as well as public health professionals who have recently been hired to protect the health and safety of residents of our communities. Importantly, public health is uniquely distinct from the health care delivery system, and the health care delivery system is unlikely to be able to step into the void left by the loss of this critical public health infrastructure.

California must not turn its back on our vital public health workforce as we continue to respond to existing and emerging public health threats. For these reasons, the County of Monterey must oppose the Governor's May Revision proposals and request to maintain funding for Future of Public Health investments. Should you have any questions regarding the County of Monterey's positions, please feel free to contact the County's Public Policy Advisor, Ashley Walker of Nossaman LLP at 916-442-8888.

Sincerely,



**Sonia M. De La Rosa**  
County Administrative Officer

cc: Members, Senate Budget and Fiscal Review Subcommittee No. 3 on Health and Human Services  
Members, Assembly Budget Subcommittee No. 1 on Health  
The Honorable Anna Caballero, 14<sup>th</sup> Senate District  
The Honorable John Laird, 17<sup>th</sup> Senate District  
The Honorable Robert Rivas, 29<sup>th</sup> Assembly District  
The Honorable Dawn Addis, 30<sup>th</sup> Assembly District  
Tim Griffiths, Senate Budget and Fiscal Review Committee  
Elizabeth Schmitt, Senate Budget and Fiscal Review Committee  
Scott Ogus, Senate Budget and Fiscal Review Committee  
Christian Griffith, Assembly Budget Committee  
Genevieve Morales, Assembly Budget Committee  
Nicole Vazquez, Assembly Budget Committee  
Kirk Feely, Senate Republican Fiscal Office  
Joe Shinstock, Assembly Republican Fiscal Office  
California State Association of Counties (CSAC)  
Rural County Representatives of California (RCRC)