

# United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

April 13, 2018

The Honorable Roy Blunt  
Chairman  
Subcommittee on Labor, Health and Human  
Services, Education, and Related Agencies  
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Patty Murray  
Ranking Member  
Subcommittee on Labor, Health and Human  
Services, Education, and Related Agencies  
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Chairman Blunt and Ranking Member Murray:

As you and your colleagues begin work on the Fiscal Year 2019 (FY2019) Labor, Health and Human Services, Education, and Related Agencies Appropriations bill, we urge you to maintain or increase funding for the Public Health Emergency Preparedness Program (PHEP) and the Hospital Preparedness Program (HPP). We believe it is essential to continue strong investments in the overall level of preparedness in our nation's health care and public health systems. This past year was the costliest year on record for U.S. natural disasters with 16 distinct events with losses exceeding \$1 billion each, highlighting our need to bolster our public health preparedness system.

PHEP is a critical source of funding for state, local, tribal and territorial public health departments. Being prepared to prevent, respond to, and rapidly recover from public health threats is critical for protecting and securing our nation's public health. We appreciate that the committee provided increased funding for PHEP in FY2018. However, PHEP has still seen a 28.8 percent decline since FY2002, causing local planners to express concerns over their ability to sustain the real and measurable advances made in public health preparedness. Recent influenza outbreaks, Zika, mass shootings, and natural disasters, underscore the importance of communities being prepared for potential threats.

Similarly, HPP enables the health care delivery system to save lives during emergencies and disaster events that exceed the day-to-day capacity and capability of existing health and emergency response systems. HPP is the only source of federal funding for health care delivery system readiness, intended to improve patient outcomes and enable rapid recovery. Again, we thank the committee for boosting funding for HPP in FY2018. However, over the last eight years federal funding for HPP has significantly decreased, from \$514 million in FY2003 to \$264.55 million in FY2018. We must ensure HPP is adequately funded so that hospitals and health care coalitions can continue to protect the population during the next disaster.

Today, hospitals, public health systems and their respective preparedness programs face many challenges. State and local health officials will likely need to make difficult choices about how to prioritize and ensure that federal dollars are directed to priority areas within their jurisdictions.

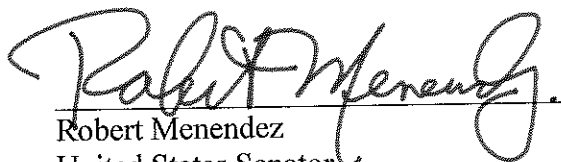
We ask that at minimum you continue to maintain federal support for PHEP and HPP at current funding levels to ensure that hospitals and health care coalitions have the necessary resources to respond to public health and other emergencies and disasters.

Thank you for your consideration of this request.

Sincerely,



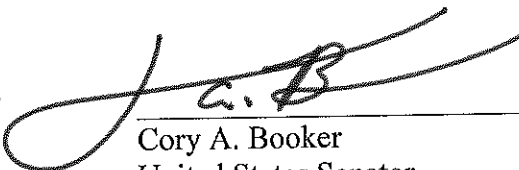
Mazie K. Hirono  
United States Senator



Robert Menendez  
United States Senator



Edward J. Markey  
United States Senator



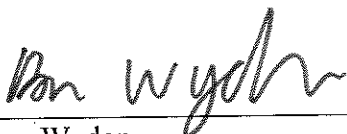
Cory A. Booker  
United States Senator



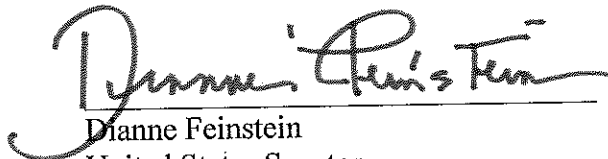
Brian Schatz  
United States Senator



Bill Nelson  
United States Senator



Ron Wyden  
United States Senator



Dianne Feinstein  
United States Senator



Margaret Wood Hassan  
United States Senator



Amy Klobuchar  
United States Senator