



STATE OF WASHINGTON

DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH

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March 13, 2023

The Hon. Patty Murray, Senator
The Hon. Suzan DelBene, Representative
The Hon. Marie Gluesenkamp Perez, Representative
The Hon. Cathy McMorris Rodgers, Representative
The Hon. Pramila Jayapal, Representative
The Hon. Adam Smith, Representative
United States Capitol
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Hon. Maria Cantwell, Senator
The Hon. Rick Larsen, Representative
The Hon. Dan Newhouse, Representative
The Hon. Derek Kilmer, Representative
The Hon. Kim Schrier, Representative
The Hon. Marilyn Strickland, Representative
United States Capitol
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Members of the Washington State Congressional Delegation:

On behalf of the Washington State Department of Health (DOH), I write to express my appreciation for your ongoing commitment to federal investments to strengthen our public health infrastructure to protect and improve the health of all Washingtonians.

Public health never sleeps. Our state has faced many threats over the past year: (1) the Omicron surge in winter; (2) the global mpox outbreak; and (3) the ‘Tripledemic’ of three simultaneous respiratory illnesses – COVID-19, RSV, and Influenza - this past fall. Amidst these public health emergencies, we have faced and tackled challenges, including helping families locate infant baby formula during supply shortages; Avian flu outbreaks; and environmental health emergencies like seasonal wildfires. These events highlight the need for smart, strategic, and sustained investments in public health infrastructure and our workforce. The federal funding we receive each year enables us to help prevent illness and injury, promote healthy places to live and work, provide education and information to help people make good health decisions, and ensure our state is prepared for public health emergencies, as we strive for equity and optimal health for all.

As Congress begins to move through the appropriations process for federal fiscal year (FFY) 2024, I request that you support and prioritize funding for the following programs:

Public Health Infrastructure and Capacity

U.S. Department of Health and Human Services
Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC)

FFY23 Enacted Level: \$250 million

FFY24 President’s Budget: \$600 million

FFY24 State Request: **\$1,000 million**

Public health emergencies strike and funding spikes; however, the funding is temporary and targeted and does not address the sustained, longitudinal needs of our public health system. Increasing this funding will disrupt this boom-and-bust cycle and support health departments in developing a highly trained workforce to respond to ongoing public health threats by providing a stable source of resources that is not segmented by disease, condition, or activity. This funding was braided into the CDC infrastructure grant to support efforts within state health agencies to build capacity to detect and respond to threats both domestically and globally while improving and supporting activities in core public health capabilities including assessment, policy, preparedness and response, community partnership, communications, equity, accountability, and performance management. Washington state was awarded \$44 million from the CDC infrastructure grant to add 51 full time equivalent employees to support an entirely new, innovative approach to state and local public health workforce. In partnership with locals, academia, and other partners an ecosystem of workforce support and development designed to improve every employee's total experience as a member of the public health workforce will be developed. More than \$15 million will be invested at the local level across our great state.

Data Modernization Initiative (DMI)

U.S. Department of Health and Human Services
Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC)

FFY23 Enacted Level: \$175 million
FFY24 President's Budget: \$340 million
***FFY24 State Request:* \$340 million**

More than three years after the start of the pandemic, many health departments still lack modern data systems and our nationwide public health data infrastructure remains disjointed. Appropriations for the DMI have resulted in meaningful progress, including the adoption of electronic case reports by more than 20,000 healthcare facilities nationwide, but there are still more updates and improvements to be made. Increased DMI funding will support continued implementation of or upgrade to electronic, interoperable public health data and vital records systems and allow for improved data infrastructure and workforce development. The COVID-19 pandemic and mpox outbreak demonstrated the necessity of real time data and the importance of data flows from states to the federal government. With these funds, Washington state can continue to improve its collection, reporting, analysis, and security of public health care data, protect patient privacy, and ensure a smooth flow of data to the federal government.

Domestic Preparedness¹

U.S. Department of Health and Human Services
Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC)

FFY23 Enacted Level: \$905 million
FFY24 President's Budget: \$943 million
***FFY24 State Request:* \$1,000 million**

The Domestic Preparedness Program allows Washington state to build capabilities and resilience in our public health structures and our communities. As Washington state is emerging from the COVID-19 pandemic, these resources are critical for both convening learning efforts and *After Action Reviews*, as well as implementing planning efforts with community partners to revise key emergency response plans to better reflect equity-focused response strategies to lean into responding to future public health threats and disasters. We send about two-thirds of this funding to local health jurisdictions, Tribes, healthcare coalitions, and other partners. Level funding will not allow us to maintain active response postures while also improving systems to respond to a growing number of infectious diseases such as coronavirus, mpox, and RSV; natural disasters such as floods, wildfires, earthquakes and tsunamis; and biological,

¹ [HHS 2024 budget in brief](#) proposes the realignment of Public Health Emergency Preparedness Cooperative Agreement; Academic Centers for PH Preparedness; and All Other CDC Preparedness into a new Domestic Preparedness PPA.

chemical, radiological, and explosive terrorism threats. In Washington state, there are many unique and catastrophic public health threats we must plan for and potentially respond to, including natural disasters such as the eruption of Mount Rainier and other active volcanos, Cascadian Faultline and other earthquakes, tsunamis, and massive forest fires. Washington is the gateway to travel across the Pacific, and we need to enhance disease screening at ports of entry to maintain global health security. Domestic preparedness funding should keep up with the unique threats that states and jurisdictions face.

Although the aforementioned programs reflect our agency's top priorities in FFY 2024, we rely on a wide array of other federally funded programs that are also critical to our success. Enclosed, please find a more comprehensive list of federal programs that the Department of Health relies on for our work. I urge your continued support for each of these programs as well.

I greatly appreciate your consideration of our requests. If you have any questions or need additional information, please contact Department of Health's Federal Relations Director, Michael Ellsworth, at Michael.Ellsworth@oh.wa.gov, or the Director of Governor Inslee's Washington, D.C. Office, Morgan Wilson, at Morgan.Wilson@gov.wa.gov.

Sincerely,



Umair A. Shah, MD, MPH
Secretary of Health

cc: Mike Ellsworth, Federal Relations Director, Department of Health
Kristopher Holiday, Chief of Strategic Partnerships, Department of Health
Elizabeth Perez, Chief of Public Affairs & Equity, Department of Health
Kristin Peterson, Chief of Policy, Planning & Evaluation, Department of Health
Jessica Todorovich, Chief of Staff, Department of Health
Morgan Wilson, Director of Governor Inslee's Washington D.C. Office

**State of Washington
Department of Health
Federal Fiscal Year 2024 Appropriations Requests**

<i>Federal Program</i>	<i>FFY23 Enacted</i>	<i>FFY24 President's Budget</i>	<i>FFY24 State Request</i>
Labor, HHS, Education and Related Agencies Subcommittee			
Ryan White HIV/AIDS Program Part B	\$1,365 million	\$1,365 million	\$1,488.3 million
HIV/AIDS, Viral Hepatitis, Sexually Transmitted Infection and Tuberculosis Prevention	\$1,391 million	\$1,545 million	\$1,545 million
Immunization and Respiratory Diseases	\$919 million	\$1,256 million	\$1,256 million
Public Health Infrastructure and Capacity	\$250 million	\$600 million	\$1,000 million
Maternal and Child Health Block Grant	\$816 million	\$937 million	\$937 million
Emerging and Zoonotic Infectious Diseases	\$751 million	\$846 million	\$846 million
Domestic Preparedness	\$905 million	\$943 million	\$1,000 million
Health Care Readiness and Recovery ²	\$305 million	\$312 million	\$312 million
Data Modernization Initiative (DMI)	\$175 million	\$340 million	\$340 million
National Center for Health Statistics	\$188 million	\$190 million	\$215 million
Prevention and Public Health Fund	\$160 million	\$210 million	\$210 million
State Office of Rural Health	\$13 million	\$13 million	\$15 million

² Formerly known as Hospital Preparedness Program