

**Outside Witness Testimony of
Timothy E. Leshan
Chief External Relations & Advocacy Officer
Association of Schools and Programs of Public Health
Subcommittee on Labor, Health and Human Services, Education and Related
Agencies
Committee on Appropriations
United States House of Representatives
FY 2027 Appropriations
April 16, 2026**

On behalf of the Association of Schools and Programs of Public Health (ASPPH), thank you for the opportunity to submit outside witness testimony regarding Fiscal Year (FY) 2027 appropriations for the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS). ASPPH appreciates the Committee's longstanding bipartisan leadership in advancing investments that protect the health, security, and economic well-being of the American people through the Appropriations Subcommittee on Labor, Health and Human Services, Education, and Related Agencies (Labor-HHS-Ed). Sustained funding for public health education, research, and workforce development is fundamental to national security, economic resilience, and population health. As such, ASPPH is requesting \$51.3 billion for the National Institutes of Health, including \$104.7 million for the Fogarty International Center; \$11.58 billion for the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, including \$35 million for the Prevention Research Centers; \$10.5 billion for the Health Resources and Services Administration, including \$15 million for Public Health Training Centers; \$1.5 million for a Healthy Longevity initiative within the Office of the Secretary; \$500 million for the Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality; and \$20 million for the Public Health Workforce Loan Repayment Program.

ASPPH represents more than 150 accredited schools and programs of public health and a community of over 100,000 deans, faculty, staff, and students nationwide. Our member institutions educate and train the next generation of the public health workforce, conduct community-based and translational research, and partner with federal, state, and local agencies to translate evidence into practice. These efforts are essential to preparing the nation to address emerging health threats, chronic disease, and health inequities.

As you draft the FY 2027 Labor-HHS-Ed appropriations bill, ASPPH urges Congress to continue building on prior investments and ensure sustained, robust funding for the federal public health infrastructure. Our FY 2027 funding recommendations align with many organizations across the public health community and reflect the scale and urgency of today's health challenges. Investments in public health agencies and programs yield measurable improvements in health outcomes, prevent avoidable healthcare costs, and strengthen national preparedness.

ASPPH is grateful for bipartisan support to strengthen the **National Institutes of Health (NIH)** and requests **at least \$51.3 billion** for NIH to support the vital work of its Institutes and Centers. NIH is the primary federal agency supporting public health research and training, awarding grants that advance scientific discovery, improve population health, and train the future workforce. Strong and predictable NIH funding is essential to maintaining U.S. leadership in biomedical and public health research.

Within the NIH budget, ASPPH requests **\$104.7 million** for the **Fogarty International Center (FIC)**, representing a 10 percent increase above FY 2026 enacted levels. With less than one-quarter of one percent of the NIH budget, FIC delivers outsized returns by strengthening global research capacity, advancing scientific training, and enabling early detection of emerging infectious disease threats. FIC-supported researchers have played critical roles in HIV/AIDS research, antimicrobial resistance, pandemic preparedness, and outbreak response—directly contributing to U.S. health security.

ASPPH was very pleased that the final FY 2026 Labor-HHS-Ed appropriations bill included **language preventing NIH from imposing a 15 percent cap on Facilities and Administrative (F&A) costs**. Efforts to develop an alternative approach to federal F&A funding, such as the Financial Accountability in Research (FAIR) model developed by members of the research community, are also appreciated. At the same time, we urge the committee to consider the complexity of public health research, which often involves large population studies and multiple partner organizations. We encourage the committee to ensure that adoption of any new F&A policy, such as the FAIR model, does not impose an undue burden on institutions conducting these complex studies.

ASPPH requests **\$11.58 billion** for the **Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC)** to allow the agency to fully carry out its mission to protect the United States from health, safety, and security threats. CDC investments are essential to detecting and responding to emerging health threats, strengthening the public health workforce, and preventing disease through evidence-based interventions.

Within the CDC total, ASPPH requests **\$35 million** for the **Prevention Research Centers (PRCs)**, a \$6.1 million increase above FY 2026 enacted levels. PRCs form a national academic network focused on prevention research and translation of evidence into policy and practice. By partnering with communities and health departments, PRCs address cancer, substance use, obesity, and other pressing public health challenges. For every federal dollar invested, PRCs leverage an average of \$4.85 in additional funding.

Additionally, ASPPH requests **\$10.5 billion** for the **Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA)** to support programs critical to developing and sustaining a strong public health workforce. Schools and programs of public health play a central role in preparing professionals to serve communities nationwide, particularly in rural and underserved areas.

Within HRSA, ASPPH requests **\$15 million** for the **Public Health Training Centers (PHTCs)**, a \$4.8 million increase above FY 2026 enacted level. PHTCs support ten regional training centers located at universities across the country and are the nation's only comprehensive workforce development system serving public health, healthcare, and behavioral health professionals. These centers strengthen local prevention systems, support economic development, and ensure the workforce is prepared to meet emerging health challenges.

In addition to agency-specific funding requests, ASPPH supports programs and activities that promote healthy longevity across the lifespan. The United States faces a pivotal moment requiring a coordinated, prevention-focused approach to improve health outcomes as the population ages. ASPPH requests **\$1.5 million** for HHS to commission a **Healthy Longevity study by the National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine** to assess existing federal investments, identify gaps and opportunities, and recommend strategies to improve coordination, effectiveness, and sustainability across research, education, practice, and policy.

ASPPH is concerned about the Department of Education's Reimagining and Improving Student Education (RISE) regulation that would narrow the definition of "professional degrees" in ways that exclude many graduate programs critical to public health, behavioral health, education, infrastructure, and public safety, potentially increasing student financial barriers, reducing enrollment, and worsening nationwide workforce shortages. The regulation would limit access to federal financial aid for programs that require graduate education, clinical training, and state licensure—such as social work, therapy professions, counseling, health administration, and nutrition—disproportionately harming lower-income and underrepresented students and undermining fields that serve the public. **ASPPH urges the Committee to include report language regarding professional degrees** in the FY 2027 Labor-HHS-ED bill to direct the Department of Education to monitor impacts, seek stakeholder input, and recommend a process to preserve the Secretary's authority to designate qualifying professional programs, using existing mechanisms and requiring no additional appropriations, while avoiding disruptive and costly changes for institutions that have long structured programs and student support around the current framework.

In addition to ASPPH's top priorities mentioned above, we also request **\$500 million** for the **Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality (AHRQ)** to advance research on health systems and improve patient care in real-world settings, recognizing AHRQ's unique role in strengthening health care delivery and outcomes. ASPPH urges **\$20 million** for the **Public Health Workforce Loan Repayment Program** within HRSA to help address persistent workforce shortages by reducing student debt barriers that discourage graduates from entering governmental public health careers. ASPPH further supports continued investment in the **National Hepatitis C Elimination Program** which would cure millions of Americans, significantly reduce liver cancer rates, and generate net federal savings through avoided healthcare costs.

Again, ASPPH appreciates the opportunity to submit this statement for the record and we stand ready to assist you and your staff with additional information and resources from across our institutions. We urge Congress to prioritize these critical public health investments in the FY 2027 Labor-HHS-ED appropriations process. Investments in public health are critical now more than ever – it will save lives, prevent healthcare costs, and strengthen national security. If you have any questions, please feel free to contact me at tleshan@aspvh.org.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Tim Leshan". The signature is written in a cursive, slightly slanted style.

Tim Leshan
Chief External Relations & Advocacy Officer
Association of Schools and Programs of Public Health