

IT'S TIME TO MAKE PUBLIC HEALTH FUNDING
A NATIONAL PRIORITY

January 30, 2006

Dear President Bush and Members of Congress:

The health of all Americans is at risk from an unprecedented range of threats, including: chronic diseases and disabilities, infectious and food borne illnesses, biological and chemical terrorism, mental disorders and substance abuse, catastrophic injuries, and a shortage of healthcare providers and trained public health workers. And yet, last year, Congress cut public health programs by over \$1 billion, many of which continue to struggle to respond to sharply increased demands in the wake of the greatest natural disaster to strike the United States: Hurricane Katrina.

Consequently, the undersigned organizations urge you to increase funding for public health through the Function 550/discretionary budget allocation in Fiscal Year 2007 by an amount reflecting application of appropriate inflation factors to the final FY 2006 funding level plus \$1 billion. The rationale for this request is two-fold: 1) to maintain purchasing power for health programs; and 2) to restore funding for programs cut in the FY 2006 appropriations process and accommodate program initiatives to protect and strengthen our nation's health. Without additional resources on this scale, our nation's public health system – the continuum of medical research, prevention, treatment and training programs -- cannot respond adequately to the threats, challenges and opportunities facing the nation.

Our request does not include – is over and above -- the Administration's anticipated funding increase for pandemic flu preparedness in the FY 2007 budget request.

To respond to this letter, please contact Dr. Marcia Mabee, Executive Director, Coalition for Health Funding: mmabee@ix.netcom.com, Voice – 703-709-3001; FAX--703-709-3003; 11479 Waterview, Suite 200; Reston, VA 20190.

Sincerely,