

September 18, 2024

Vice President Kamala Harris
Vice President of the United States
PO Box 58174
Philadelphia, PA 19102

Dear Vice President Harris:

Congratulations on your nomination by the Democratic Party for President of the United States. As you have experienced over the last four years, the complexity of the public health issues facing the nation and the world continue to evolve. Your strong leadership is necessary to help unify perspectives and meet the shared vision of better health for everyone, everywhere. This can be achieved under your guidance through effective communication and evidence-based policy making.

The Association of Schools and Programs of Public Health (ASPPH) is the voice of Council on Education for Public Health (CEPH)-accredited academic public health, representing over 150 schools and programs of public health across the nation. Our mission is to strengthen the capacity of our members by advancing leadership, excellence, and collaboration for academic public health. The Association is committed to assisting our national leaders in successfully addressing public health challenges and opportunities. We welcome the opportunity to provide for you and your staff:

- Personnel suggestions as you continue to identify federal appointees and nominees.
- Details on the Association's policy agenda and its rationale.
- Briefings and white papers on key health issues of interest by faculty experts.

Presidential Leadership Needed

The Association urges you and your Administration to commit to leading the nation and world in addressing public health emergencies and in creating an environment in which public health can support optimal health outcomes for our communities and our nation. To do so, we must have federal leadership that:

- Encourages strengthened coordination across federal public health agencies (*please see the attachment for ASPPH's proposed Academic Public Health Research and Partnerships Agenda*).
- Nominates and appoints individuals with public health training to key leadership and advisory positions.
- Communicates clearly and in concert with federal agencies and key stakeholders.
- Respects science, peer-reviewed research, and data and their use in policy and decision making.
- Works tirelessly to restore trust in federal science agencies and to encourage and reward federal scientists who "speak truth to power."

- Leads a sustained national effort to eliminate health disparities and promote social justice by acknowledging and addressing the social determinants of health.
- Supports an investment and regulatory agenda that reflects our nation's values and aspirations regarding health and wellness.
- Respects strong international organizations focused on health and advances global engagement and collaboration.
- Promotes transparency and respects the independence of critical scientific and regulatory bodies like the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and the Food & Drug Administration (FDA).

The Challenges Ahead: Opportunities to Make a Lasting and Deep Impact

As President, you have an extraordinary opportunity to shape federal public health policy that can benefit a generation, saving lives and creating a culture of wellness. We urge you to use your second term to unveil creative legislative and regulatory initiatives and shape the priorities of federal agencies. Areas in which you can have a major impact include:

Cross Cutting Issues of Importance to the Academic Public Health Community

- Expand investments in the public health workforce and infrastructure, including sustained federal funding for key public health agencies such as the National Institutes of Health (NIH), Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA), Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality (AHRQ), the United States Agency for International Development (USAID), among others.
- Solidify partnerships with the academic public health community particularly in areas impacting gun violence prevention, climate change and health, diversity, equity, inclusion, and justice (DEIJ) and addressing health disparities, healthy longevity, and the opioid epidemic and substance use disorders.
- Prepare for future pandemics and strengthen the White House Office of Pandemic Preparedness and Response Policy (OPPR) to bolster policies impacting the public health system and workforce, such as support for loan repayment in return for service in governmental public health.
- Prioritize federal programs in prevention research and science, including areas impacting chronic disease and health promotion, rural health, mental health, and global health and work to score prevention as a savings in new legislation and programs.
- Rebuild trust in the U.S. public health system through exploring measures to combat public health misinformation and disinformation, and improving the link between democracy and health policy, and modernizing public health data systems.

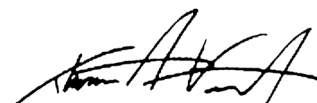
As we learned during the COVID-19 pandemic, strong, predictable federal investment in the public health system is critical. Our nation must be prepared and ready to respond to future emerging health risks. The current Administration has proven to understand that it is not a matter of *if* but *when* the next public health emergency will occur. By building the core public health infrastructure of states, localities, tribal governments, and territories, as well as the CDC, the nation will be better prepared for the next threat.

Vice President Harris, the Association of Schools and Programs of Public Health pledges to work with you and your Administration to surmount the many public health challenges facing our country. In the interim, please do not hesitate to have your teams contact Tim Leshan; tleshan@aspph.org, 202-296-1099 ext.132 if we can be of assistance.

Sincerely,



Laura Magaña, PhD, MS
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