



Leaders in Applied Public Health Epidemiology

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www.cste.org

CSTE is an organization that supports epidemiologists practicing at the state, territorial, tribal, and local levels.

Executive Board:

February 23, 2011

President:

Stephen Ostroff, MD
*Director, Bureau of
Epidemiology
Pennsylvania*

Dear Senator:

President-Elect:

Tom Safranek, MD
*State Epidemiologist
Nebraska*

The Council of State and Territorial Epidemiologists (CSTE) is very concerned about the deep cuts to public health programs proposed in H.R. 1, especially those reductions that affect the nation's premier public health agency, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). CSTE urges you to reject H.R. 1 along with any amendments that even further reduce CDC's budget, as cuts of this magnitude will have a profound impact on the ability of our public health system to protect and promote the health and wellbeing of all Americans.

Vice President:

Mel Kohn, MD, MPH
*Director, Public Health Division
Oregon*

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) is one of the most highly regarded federal agencies by the public and has provided outstanding leadership domestically and internationally over the past 60 years. CDC's disease monitoring, prevention, and health promotion programs, done in collaboration with state, local, tribal and territorial public health agencies are the basis for health security and protection to the U.S. public. CDC's programs and recommendations touch every American, and in times of public health crises, CDC is looked to for leadership in disease detection, diagnosis, and response to outbreaks or threats to the public's health. We also look to CDC to provide science-based guidance on public health concerns ranging from chronic disease to environmental health to immunizations to other preventive measures.

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Executive Director:

Patrick J. McConnon, MPH

The science of public health is built upon the foundation of sound epidemiology. Our nation's public health epidemiologists monitor, detect, and respond to threats to the public's health. Epidemiologists at all levels of government can only perform their critical role within a system that requires close partnership at the federal, state and local levels. Without adequate Federal funding, particularly at this time of deep recession and its impact on state and local governments, it will prove impossible for epidemiologists to protect the health and security of the public by rapid detection and decisive response actions. If the proposed cuts occur, the activities of these health professionals will be severely compromised resulting in delayed detection and inadequate response to preventable acute disease outbreaks and other public health emergencies. The cuts will also curtail, or cause to cease entirely, important efforts around healthcare associated infections, foodborne illness, obesity, injury prevention, asthma, diabetes and other key areas where the public health role is critical to protect the public, reduce the burden of these diseases and conditions, and reduce spiraling health care costs.

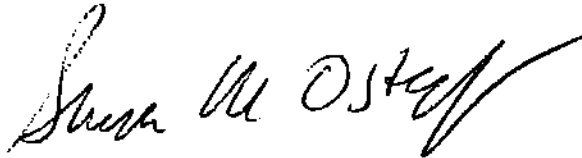
The deep cuts proposed in H.R. 1 to the Centers of Disease Control and Prevention and efforts to cut Affordable Care Act Prevention and Public Health Funds will hurt every citizen in every state and county by seriously weakening, and possibly destroying, the very basic public health infrastructure that protects them on a daily basis from health threats known and unknown. To vote in favor of these cuts is a breach of the public's trust that government's role in security and protection extends to their health and protection from preventable diseases.

The American public expects its government to promptly and aggressively respond to public health threats and to contain emerging health threats. We can neither allow nor afford to have our public health infrastructure fail at crucial tasks such as the investigation of foodborne outbreaks, bioterrorist threats, or environmental emergencies. The proposed cuts will directly affect these and other important public health activities exposing the American public to greater risk of disease and injury and increasing the cost burden on the healthcare system.

CSTE is an organization of member states and represents the perspective of epidemiologists working in state, local and territorial governments on matters related to the practice of public health. It is also a professional association of over 1,150 public health epidemiologists in all 50 States, 6 Territories, Tribes, Puerto Rico, and the Virgin Islands. CSTE members are the frontline "disease detectives" for a wide range of public health threats, including infectious disease outbreaks, bioterrorism events, other health emergencies, chronic disease, environmental health threats, maternal and child health, occupational health threats and injuries.

CSTE does not believe this is an outcome desired by anyone in the U.S. House of Representatives, or the U.S. Senate, but to prevent it from becoming a reality requires a vote against H.R. 1 and against amendments to seriously reduce or eliminate the Affordable Care Act's Prevention and Public Health Fund.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Stephen M. Ostroff". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long, sweeping underline that extends to the right.

Stephen M. Ostroff, MD
President