

September 6, 2018

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*National Advocates for
Asian American,
Native Hawaiian &
Pacific Islander Health*

The Honorable Roy Blunt
Chairman
Subcommittee on Labor, HHS and
Education Committee on Appropriations
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Tom Cole
Chairman
Subcommittee on Labor,
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Services, Education, and
Related Agencies
United States House of
Representatives |
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Patty Murray
Ranking Member
Subcommittee on Labor, HHS and Education
Committee on Appropriations
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Rosa DeLauro
Ranking Member
Subcommittee on Labor, Health
and Human Services,
Education, and Related
Agencies
United States House of
Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Senator Blunt, Senator Murray, Representative Cole and Representative DeLauro,

As you work to complete a final appropriations bill for the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS), we write you to urge that you maximize funding for the Racial and Ethnic Approaches to Community Health (REACH) program. In June, we joined 147 other organizations to ask that REACH be funded at the \$57.95 million level, a small increase from current levels to reflect the fact that funding for the program has not been adjusted for inflation. While we were pleased to see that both the Senate and House appropriations bills funded REACH, we ask that your final joint bill fund the program at the \$57.95 million level.

The Asian & Pacific Islander American Health Forum (APIAHF) is the nation's oldest and largest health justice organization working to improve the health and well-being of over 20 million Asian Americans, Native Hawaiians and Pacific Islanders (AA and NHPI). APIAHF works to promote better health outcomes among diverse populations facing disparities, and we know from experience that investing in community driven solutions is often the best way to improve health. REACH funds community-based organizations to identify, develop, and disseminate effective strategies for addressing health disparities across a wide range of health priority areas such as cardiovascular disease, diabetes, breast and cervical cancer, infant mortality, asthma, immunization, and obesity. In the coming weeks, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention is expected to announce a new five-year grant period for REACH funding, which has proven to be a prudent use of federal dollars.

AAs and NHPIs face distinct disparities due to chronic conditions. For example, AAs are 25 percent more likely to be diagnosed with diabetes than Whites, while NHPIs are 3 times more likely. AAs and NHPIs benefit from the culturally and

linguistically appropriate and targeted resources that community based organizations provide. AA and NHPI communities are extremely diverse, tracing their heritage to more than 50 countries and speaking 100 different languages. Such diversity means that REACH funded organizations, such as the Kokua Kalihi Valley Health Center in Hawaii or Salaam Cleveland in Ohio, are often best situated to assess their needs. REACH is the only federally funded grant program that provides the opportunity for these organizations to apply their knowledge of the populations they serve to improving health outcomes.

Given the staggering costs to both impacted families and our country as a whole from chronic disease, now is the time to promote effective solutions driven by smart, population-based interventions. As such, we urge you to fund REACH at the \$57.95 level, making a smart investment in the health of our nation.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Kathy Ko Chin', with a long horizontal line extending to the right.

Kathy Ko Chin
President & CEO