Dear Chair Baldwin, Ranking Member Capito, Chair Aderholt, and Ranking Member DeLauro:

Thank you for your support for our nation’s public health workforce and data systems in recent years. As you address ongoing public health needs, the undersigned organizations urge you and your colleagues to pass a Labor, Health and Human Services, Education and Related Agencies (LHHS) appropriations bill for Fiscal Year (FY) 2025 that includes funding to modernize and sustain our public health data infrastructure. The undersigned organizations respectfully request at least $340 million annually for public health data modernization at the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC).

CDC’s Data Modernization Initiative (DMI) is a long-term commitment to building and maintaining world-class data systems and workforce that meet the nation’s ongoing need to safeguard health. Public health data is not only needed during an emergency response; it is necessary for people and communities to thrive by rapidly identifying, tracking, and responding to daily public health threats of all types—acute, chronic, and emerging. DMI plays a critical role to ensure public health receives data from the health care system that is essential to the disease detection and outbreak response efforts that keep communities safe.

As technology evolves and becomes more central to supporting and maintaining our health, our public health data systems will continue to need updates, software patches, security vulnerability protection, and upgrades, and the staff supporting these critical systems will need ongoing training. Public health workers and agencies are essential for protecting and improving the health of communities, but they cannot do their work without adequate funding.

Providing sustained yearly funding for public health data is a key investment for the continuous improvement of our public health infrastructure, which we estimate will cost $7.8 billion over five years at the state, Tribal, local, and territorial (STLT) levels with additional funding needed to support data efforts at the CDC. By supporting these efforts Congress will directly impact every jurisdiction’s ability to keep their communities safe. So far, Congress has provided an initial down payment of approximately $1 billion for public health data modernization through annual and supplemental appropriations—which has been critical to catalyzing the work, but consistent annual funding is necessary to maintain improvements, make continued upgrades as technology advances, and support the expert public health
workforce. Lack of consistent funding will halt progress, and force health departments to move backwards abandoning projects before completion.

Funding for data modernization will also make possible the work of the CDC’s Center for Forecasting and Outbreak Analytics (CFA). An additional $100 million appropriation for CFA in FY25 will fund the Center to facilitate the use of data, modeling, and analytics established by DMI to improve pandemic preparedness and response. CFA is already transforming our disease modeling capabilities with the initial funds received using data and processes established by DMI. CDC is using the Response Ready Enterprise Data Integration platform (RREDI) to integrate multiple data streams to provide a full picture that can be used to guide the public health response. DMI, CFA, and RREDI are each necessary components of the CDC’s data strategy, and each must be funded separately and robustly to help communities stay safe and thrive. Base funding for data modernization must be retained and grow with still additional funds added for CFA and RREDI.

We are grateful for the subcommittee’s bipartisan support of public health data modernization so people and communities can know about health threats in their own back yards. Continuous investment in these crucial activities is essential to ensure the strength and resilience of the nationwide public health data system. As you work to finalize the FY25 LHHS bill, we respectfully request at least $340 million for CDC’s Public Health Data Modernization Initiative. Thank you for your leadership and for considering our recommendation.

Sincerely,

Association of Public Health Laboratories
Association of State and Territorial Health Officials
Big Cities Health Coalition
Council of State and Territorial Epidemiologists
Health Care Information and Management Systems Society (HIMSS)
Naphsis
National Association of County and City Health Officials