



July 28, 2022

The Honorable Xavier Becerra
Secretary, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services
200 Independence Avenue, S.W.
Washington, D.C. 20201

Re: Epidemiology and Laboratory Capacity Funding Flexibility for Monkeypox Response

Dear Secretary Becerra,

We, the undersigned members of the California Legislature, strongly urge the federal government to authorize Epidemiology and Laboratory Capacity (ELC) funds to be used flexibly for Monkeypox response. State and local health departments have greatly benefited from the ELC funds from the federal government since 1995, and especially since 2020, when these funds were specifically used to combat the COVID-19 pandemic.

In California, we are facing another emerging epidemic threat: monkeypox. With quick action now, we can stop the spread of this contagious disease through vaccinating, testing, disease investigation, and contact tracing. Local health departments need increased funding and increased flexibility to address this issue now before it spreads farther into our communities. This is why we are requesting that ELC funding previously awarded be made flexible for use in monkeypox activities.

It is our understanding that the Centers for Disease Prevention and Control have only authorized two awards to be used to support monkeypox testing, testing supplies and reagents: 1) ELC Strengthening Laboratories Preparedness, and 2) Strengthening PHL Preparedness through Laboratory Response Network. However, our state and local health department have additional costs associated with Monkeypox response that the flexibility will support, such as testing, vaccinations, treatment, contact tracing, and communications.

The federal government can provide flexibility to use the following awards for both COVID-19 and monkeypox efforts and should continue this flexibility should other public health threats emerge. Specifically, California is asking for flexibility for the following awards: 1) ELC Enhancing Detection and 2) ELC Expansion. California's local health departments received a total allocation of \$293 million and \$1.2 billion from the ELC Enhancing Detection and ELC Expansion funds. While these funds continue to be critical for our ongoing COVID-19 response, being able to leverage these funds for our immediate monkeypox response needs would be instrumental.

California believes this aligns with the intended use of the funding which is to support activities related to COVID-19 response and other emerging diseases.

These funds are already used for skilled personnel and detailed logistics, all of which could be easily transferred to or shared with the monkeypox effort. We hope that you will allow this flexibility.

Sincerely,



Scott Wiener
Senator, 11th District



Susan Eggman
Senator, 5th District



Nancy Skinner
Senator, 9th District



Lena Gonzalez
Senator, 33rd District



Matt Haney
Assemblymember 17th District



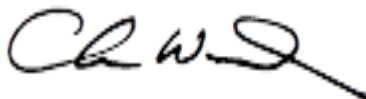
Buffy Wicks
Assemblymember, 15th District



Miguel Santiago
Assemblymember, 53rd District



Sabrina Cervantes
Assemblymember, 60th District



Chris Ward
Assemblymember, 78th District



John Laird
Senator, 17th District

The Honorable Xavier Becerra
July 28, 2022
Page 3

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Phil Ting". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style with some loops and flourishes.

Phil Ting
Assemblymember, 19th District