



**NEW YORK STATE ASSOCIATION
OF COUNTY HEALTH OFFICIALS**

Leading the Way to Healthier Communities

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**Funding Cuts Force Early Termination of Public Health Fellowship
Corps, Cutting New York's Public Health Workforce by 168**

STATEMENT BY: Sarah Ravenhall, MHA, CHES, Executive Director

“New York State is facing a devastating loss to its public health system following an abrupt decision by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) to cut \$11 billion in nationwide public health funding. This unanticipated reduction includes a staggering \$400 million loss for New York State, directly impacting essential programs that protect the health and safety of residents. One of the most significant consequences of these budget cuts facing local health departments is the premature termination of the Public Health Fellowship Corps—an exceptionally successful workforce initiative launched in 2021. This program was designed to cultivate the next generation of public health professionals, strengthening the local public health workforce at a critical time.

The Public Health Fellowship Corps currently employs approximately 168 fellows statewide, 146 of whom have been embedded within local health departments or community sites to address critical public health challenges. These dedicated professionals have provided frontline support in epidemiology, oral health, immunizations, school-based care, women’s health, maternal mortality, communicable disease prevention, child nutrition and wellness, public water supply safety, and numerous other health priorities. Their contributions have been instrumental in bolstering a pathway for New York's public health workforce at a time when shortages were already straining the system.

Tragically, as a result of the federal funding cuts, 168 fellows will be forced to leave their positions 13 months ahead of schedule, creating a sudden and significant gap in the public health workforce and our ability to respond to emergencies statewide. These individuals have dedicated themselves to serving communities and safeguarding the health of New Yorkers. We recognize and deeply appreciate their hard work and commitment, and we acknowledge the challenges they now face in seeking new employment opportunities due to this unforeseen change.

The loss of these trained professionals is a serious blow to public health preparedness. Their diverse skill sets and dedication to protecting communities are not easily

replaced, leaving us more vulnerable to preventable infectious diseases and public health threats.

Investing in prevention saves lives and reduces costs. Cutting public health funding does not lead to economic savings—it leads to higher expenses when preventable illnesses escalate into costly medical emergencies. Reducing support for workforce initiatives, such as the fellowship program, increases the risk of disease outbreaks and other public health crises, putting communities at risk.

We are grateful to Governor Hochul and the New York State Department of Health leadership for their efforts to minimize the harm caused by this decision. We urge our leaders in Congress to prioritize sustained funding for public health programs, ensuring we remain prepared to protect communities and respond to future crises.”

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