

The Honorable (Full Name), Governor of (State);

The American Nurses Association (ANA) supports significant reinvestment in our nation's public health infrastructure and workforce, which have been chronically underfunded for decades. A robust public health infrastructure and workforce better equips the nation with preparedness and response measures not only during times of crisis but to address the overall health and well-being of individuals. As a nation, we must correct the course immediately and commit to steady and sufficient reinvestments in our public health.

A robust public health infrastructure and workforce better equips the nation with preparedness and response measures during times of crisis. However, this investment extends far beyond disaster preparedness and emergency response. Our public health workforce, of which public health nurses are the largest segment, touch every aspect of health care and community wellbeing. They play an integral role in narrowing disparities, improving health outcomes, and reducing disproportionately high morbidity and mortality rates due to preventable illness.

This pandemic is the latest in a long string of emergencies that put a spotlight on what damage underinvesting in public health can do to a society – even in the country that spends twice as much on healthcare as other high-income countries. As policymakers look to reduce expenditures in the future resulting from the current pandemic, we are left unprepared to face new emergencies and fall behind addressing other public health priorities, such as ending HIV, eliminating maternal and infant health disparities, access to immunizations, preventing chronic illness, and building equitable prevention programs to close health disparity gaps.

Hurricanes, floods, and the opioid crisis are not new and trends indicate they are intensifying over time. As a nation, if we are to lessen the impact of these crises, we must make steady and sufficient investments in our public health infrastructure and workforce that stands ready to meet these challenges. We cannot continue to shortchange a system that is vital to the health and lives of our population. While we call on all levels of government to support public health beyond disaster preparedness and emergency response, Governors are uniquely positioned to maximize state resources in employing strategies to address ongoing public health demands.

Sincerely,