

March XX, 2023

Assemblymember Phil Ting
Chair, Assembly Budget Committee
1021 O St. Ste. 8230
Sacramento, CA 95814

Senator Nancy Skinner
Chair, Senate Budget and Fiscal Review Committee
1021 O St. Ste. 8630
Sacramento, CA 95814

**Re: Reject Governor's Proposal to
Delay Implementation of the
CHW/P Workforce and Training
Funds**

Dear Senator Skinner and Assemblymember Ting:

Under Governor Newsom's proposed FY 2023-24 state budget, HCAI requests to delay until FY 2024-25 and FY 2025-26, \$130 million in expenditure authority approved in the 2022 Budget Act for grants and stipends to Community Health Workers, Promotoras and, Representatives (CHWPRs). The California Pan-Ethnic Health Network, California Consortium for Urban Indian Health, Latino Coalition for Healthy California, El Sol Neighborhood Educational Center, National Health Law Program, Regional Asthma Management & Prevention, The Children's Partnership, Transitions Clinic Network, Roots Community Health Center, and Visión y Compromiso and the undersigned organizations, oppose the reversion of these funds, and urges the legislature to reject the Governor's proposal. A portion of the previously allocated funds should be used now to establish a robust and inclusive public stakeholder planning process, grants and stipends for non-profit training entities and individuals interested in becoming CHWPRs. These funds are critical to ensuring HCAI is on track to train and certify 15,000 CHWPRs by 2025 and fully implement a robust workforce training program and must be restored as part of the FY 2023-24 state budget.

- **Maintaining Funds for Non-Profit Training Entities and CHWPRs in 2023-24 will help to Ensure California is on Track to Meet the Governor's Ambitious Workforce Goals in FY 24-25 and 25-26:** We oppose the Governor's decision to delay the allocation of funds for CHWPR grants and stipends. These funds are critical to building a robust culturally and linguistically responsive workforce that can meet the needs of California's diverse populations. This is particularly important as California looks for ways to address homelessness, climate change, and dementia, and the state's Medi-Cal program moves to integrate new CHWPR services into the program. We reject the Governor's FY 2023-24 proposal to delay funds for grants and stipends that will ensure training entities are able to train the next generation of CHWPRs.
- **Funds are Needed TODAY to Support an Inclusive Public Stakeholder Planning**

Process: Our organizations have been involved in current stakeholder discussions at HCAI as it moves to meet an ambitious, July 1, 2023 deadline by which to initiate training and certification standards for CHWPRs. While we commend HCAI for hosting listening sessions with different dates and times and specific sessions that centered CHWPRs, Tribal communities, and Spanish speakers, the overarching process feels rushed, with limited opportunities for engagement, discussion, and language accessibility, even in Spanish. It is critical that future stakeholder discussions, particularly discussions around how workforce funds should be allocated, be CHWPR centered and inclusive. We were dismayed to learn for example, that HCAI is having internal conversations about potential award amounts for training entities without consulting with community-based CHWPR experts. The amounts they are considering (\$50,000 per training entity) will be too low to achieve the state's objectives. **Maintaining these critical workforce training funds in FY 2023-24 will help to ensure HCAI is able to establish a robust community-led CHWPR planning process that includes robust listening sessions with training entities and CHWPR individuals in multiple languages, target outreach to the breadth and scope of diverse training entities and CHWPRs, allow for mutual discussion, and host sessions in partnership with diverse organizations across the state.** This type of robust stakeholder process is necessary to ensure these invaluable CHWPR training opportunities and stipends through HCAI are accessible to the state's diverse CHWPRs including racially/ethnically diverse individuals and those with intersecting identities, including non-English speaking, low-income, formerly incarcerated, and undocumented.

- **Funds Should be Used to Establish a Standing Stakeholder Advisory Committee:** HCAI is working diligently to develop training and certification standards by July 1st. Yet there is no discussion of what happens after that date. We just learned that HCAI is planning to hire an outside vendor to assist with oversight of the new training and certificate applications it receives. We are dismayed that HCAI is not focused on building its internal capacity as well as continuing to tap into the collective knowledge and wisdom of California's diverse CHWPR training entities to ensure the launch of the training and certificate program is a success. **We reject the Governor's FY 2023-24 proposal to delay the allocation of these workforce funds, and urge the Legislature to direct a portion of the funds for HCAI to establish a standing advisory committee led by CHWPRs, racially and ethnically diverse training entities, CBOs, beneficiaries, experts in the field, and others tasked with ongoing monitoring and evaluation of HCAI's new training and certificate requirements.** We need to ensure CHWPRs have decision-making powers and leadership roles in defining their own profession and leading a community transformation model.

Conclusion: For CHWPRs to truly be an anti-racist strategy to address our state's growing health inequities, we must shift power to CHWPRs and ensure our voices lead state policies and investments for our workforce. **We oppose the delay of these critical workforce funds and strongly urge the legislature to reject the proposal. These workforce funds must be included as part of the FY 2023-24 state budget for training, stipends and a more permanent stakeholder advisory committee to ensure CHWPRs have a strong voice in future decisions about their own workforce.**

Sincerely,

El Sol Neighborhood Education Center

Regional Asthma Management and Prevention
Latino Coalition for a Healthy California
The Children's Partnership
South Asian Network
API Equality LA
Buen Vecino
Health Net
California Association of Community Health Workers
Abrazar
The Culturally Responsive Domestic Violence Network
The East Los Angeles Women's Center
Children Now
Maternal Mental Health NOW
California Black Health Network
California Immigrant Policy Center
The Central Valley Urban Institute
Community Health Partnership
Public Health Advocates
Sonoma Connect Sonoma Unidos
National Health Law Program
Vision y Compromiso
The Health Alliance for Violence Intervention
Southeast Asia Resource Action Center
Para Los Niños
Pacific Asian Counseling Services (PACS)
BPSOS Center for Community Advancement Inc.
California Health+Advocates
California Rural Legal Assistance Foundation
Level Up Norcal
United Women of East Africa Support Team
Western Center on Law and Poverty

Asian American Drug Abuse Program, Inc.

Coalition for Humane Immigrant Rights

Empowering Pacific Islander Communities

Steinberg Institute