

September 28, 2021

The Honorable Patrick Leahy  
Chairman, United States Senate  
Committee on Appropriations  
Room S-128, The Capitol  
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Richard Shelby  
Vice Chairman, United States Senate  
Committee on Appropriations  
Room S-128, The Capitol  
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Patty Murray  
Chair, Labor, Health and Human  
Services, Education, and Related  
Agencies Subcommittee  
154 Russell Senate Office Building  
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Roy Blunt  
Ranking Member, Labor, Health and  
Human Services, Education, and Related  
Agencies Subcommittee  
260 Russell Senate Office Building  
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Senators Leahy, Shelby, Murray, and Blunt:

The 45 undersigned organizations are writing to request your continued support of funding for the CDC's Division of Adolescent and School Health (CDC/DASH) and request that DASH be funded at \$100 million in the Senate's FY'22 Subcommittee on Labor, Health and Human Services, Education, and Related Agencies appropriations bill (LHHS).

Health risk behaviors and experiences related to sexual behavior, high-risk substance use, violence, and poor mental health contribute to substantial health problems for adolescents, including suicide. Consequences of these risks extend beyond health and well-being during adolescence and early interventions result in positive outcomes in adulthood. DASH is the only federally funded HIV and STI prevention-focused program for adolescents in our nation's schools working to directly address these health risk behaviors. This high-quality program is associated with significant decreases in sexual risk behaviors, experience of violence, and substance use, as recently reported in *Journal of Adolescent Health*.

Currently, DASH provides funding to 28 local education agencies across the country to implement school-based programs and practices designed to reduce HIV and other STIs among young people. The work within DASH expands the research and evidence base to better meet the needs of young people, including LGBTQ+ youth, youth of color, and other marginalized adolescents.

With additional funding, DASH would expand the number of students served through its science-based approaches that have been shown to support and improve not just young people's sexual health, but their overall health and well-being. With \$100 million, DASH would fund the 100 largest local education agencies in the country, reaching 20 percent of all middle and high school students directly through their programs. Additionally, that money would support DASH funding for 57 state and territorial education agencies, allowing DASH to reach the remaining 80 percent of

students through statewide implementation of safe and supportive school environments for young people.

We are very pleased that the House of Representatives included an increase for DASH funding in its FY22 LHHHS Appropriations bill. While that increased funding level will expand the reach of DASH's programming, to ensure that all young people, no matter where they live, benefit from DASH programs, we request that you fund DASH at \$100 million in your FY22 Appropriations bill.

Sincerely,

Advocates for Youth  
AIDS Alliance for Women, Infants, Children, Youth & Families  
AIDS Foundation Chicago  
AIDS United  
American Academy of HIV Medicine  
American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists  
American College of Nurse-Midwives  
American Sexual Health Association  
American Sexually Transmitted Diseases Association  
American Atheists  
American Psychological Association  
APLA Health  
Association of Maternal & Child Health Programs  
Association of State and Territorial Health Officials  
Black AIDS Institute  
Cascade AIDS Project  
Covid Clinic  
Cush Health Impact  
Equality California  
Friends For Life, Corp  
Girls Inc.  
Healthy Teen Network  
HIV + Hepatitis Policy Institute  
HIV Medicine Association  
International Association of Providers of AIDS Care  
Latino Commission on AIDS  
Los Angeles LGBT Center  
Medical Students for Choice  
NASTAD  
National Association of County and City Health Officials  
National Coalition of STD Directors  
National Family Planning & Reproductive Health Association  
National Organization for Women  
National PTA  
National Working Positive Coalition  
NMAC  
Planned Parenthood Federation of America  
Population Institute  
Power to Decide

Religious Coalition for Reproductive Choice  
SIECUS: Sex Ed for Social Change  
The Center for HIV Law & Policy (CHLP)  
The Trevor Project  
Treatment Action Group  
URGE: Unite for Reproductive & Gender Equity

---

<sup>i</sup> Robin L, Timpe Z, Suarez NA, Li J, Barrios L, Ethier KA. Local Education Agency Impact on School Environments to Reduce Health Risk Behaviors and Experiences Among High School Students. *J Adolesc Health*. 2021 Sep 13:S1054-139X(21)00400-6. doi: 10.1016/j.jadohealth.2021.08.004. Epub ahead of print. PMID: 34531096.