

COALITION *for* HEALTH FUNDING

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

April 23, 2020

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Washington, D.C. – Coalition for Health Funding Executive Director Angela Ostrom issued the following statement in response to today's passage of the coronavirus interim relief package H.R. 266:

Health security is national security. The Coalition for Health Funding applauds Congress for passing HR 266, which includes emergency funding for testing, hospitals, and health providers. The COVID-19 pandemic has exposed the chronic underfunding of our public health infrastructure and it is critical that Congress continues to support efforts to fight the pandemic. The Coalition for Health Funding calls on Congress to begin bipartisan discussions for fifth package to provide continued resources for the nation's public health priorities.

While today's legislation will provide a much-needed injection of funds, it is critical to monitor and assess the ongoing needs as this pandemic continues to evolve. While this bill is a critical step, Congress must work together to support a national testing protocol and infrastructure – to procure the supplies needed for testing, to support laboratories, and to increase the public health workforce recruitment, training, and retention efforts. Ongoing support is needed to provide personal protective equipment (PPE) to individuals on the front lines, including health care providers and vulnerable populations.

Another critical priority is continued funding for vaccine research, and a distribution plan to make it available quickly and affordable to every American. We need to begin building the infrastructure now for rapid deployment when the vaccine is developed.

Finally, at the heart of this once in a life time pandemic is the individual Americans who are suffering whether from COVID-19 itself or due to the economic downturn. Ongoing federal support is needed to buttress public and private social service programs supporting Americans from coast-to-coast as they navigate through historic levels of unemployment. Our members are the individuals on the frontlines, the patients suffering, the medical researchers trying to find a cure, universities, hospitals, and charities who have been gravely impacted. It is on their behalf that we look forward to working with Congress and the Administration to ensure the nation's public health needs are met today and are planned for into tomorrow.

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The Coalition for Health Funding, celebrating 50 years as a leading nonprofit alliance working to preserve public health investments in the interest of all Americans. Our 91 member organizations together represent more than 100 million patients and consumers, health providers, professionals, and researchers.

<http://www.publichealthfunding.org>

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