

## A NATIONAL CALL TO ELEVATE HEALTH AS A GOVERNING PRIORITY

This is a critical moment for the health of Americans. Medical research, affordable access to healthcare and treatment, and strong public health systems are fundamental to our quality of life, economic stability, workforce strength and national security.

Health is not a niche issue. It touches every person, family, employer, community and local economy.

When health systems are underfunded or destabilized, people suffer, families are driven into bankruptcy, communities lose services and the nation becomes less prepared for the next crisis. Gutting global health infrastructure exacerbates political instability and threatens U.S. security interests. This weakens our nation's global influence and does nothing to reduce the federal deficit.

Budget cuts to Medicaid, and the Centers for Disease Control and National Institutes of Health, are threats to the health of all Americans. Many cuts passed by Congress last year will not go into effect until after this fall's election, when they will cause severe local economic damage, the loss of over a million jobs, billions in reduced tax revenues and lost state GDP.

**Seven Days in June: HEALTH IS PRIMARY** is a decentralized, nonpartisan, grassroots-driven

campaign to focus attention on how funding cuts, as well as policy and regulatory changes, will devastate local communities. **From June 1 to June 7**, local organizations and advocates from across the country will demand that federal, state and local representatives clearly articulate how they will:

- Improve affordability and access to care and treatment.
- Sustain and strengthen biomedical research.
- Protect and modernize domestic and global public health infrastructure.
- Provide stability for seniors, veterans, rural communities, people with disabilities, working families and others reliant on accessible, affordable healthcare.

Local groups and advocates will organize town halls, panel discussions, forums, demonstrations, marches, rallies, vigils, interfaith services, social media campaigns and other tactics, as appropriate for their organizations and communities.

Our goal is to establish a civic expectation that health must be treated as a **core governing responsibility**, regardless of ideology or party. **Working together, we can build a healthier nation.**

## WHY THIS MOMENT MATTERS

Across the country, chronic diseases are affecting more Americans and account for the majority of U.S. health spending. Preventable conditions are too often detected late, compounding costs and suffering. Preventable disease outbreaks have re-emerged as vaccination rates have declined.

Strained public health workforces and disease surveillance systems are already near a breaking point. Reductions in biomedical research funding slows innovation and threatens future advances in prevention and treatment. Community hospitals and safety-net providers face mounting financial pressure.

Chaotic and inconsistent health investment carries real consequences. Short-term politics should not undermine long-term health security.

Sponsors of this initiative include:

- Organizations, leaders and advocates focused on heart, cancer, diabetes, HIV/AIDS and other chronic or life-threatening conditions
- Human rights and civil rights leaders
- Public health, healthcare workers and medical professionals
- Research, academia, and scientists
- Labor and workforce leaders
- Faith communities and faith-based service providers
- Senior, veteran and disability advocates and organizations
- Hospital and health system leaders
- Business and civic organizations

## Health is not ideological.

### **HEALTH IS PRIMARY.**

#### HERE'S WHAT YOU CAN DO

- **Endorse the Seven Days in June: HEALTH IS PRIMARY** campaign.
- **Organize** or co-sponsor Town Hall meetings with health department officials, agency heads, service providers and representatives to examine the impact of health cuts on your local communities.
- **Demand** clear and specific commitments from local, state, and federal officials, to protect and strengthen America's health systems through candidate forums, questionnaires and published score cards.
- **Participate** in rallies, demonstrations, AIDS Memorial Quilt displays, social media campaigns, as appropriate for your organizations and communities.
- **Celebrate** your local "healthcare heroes," the hard-working people whose skill and compassion are the backbone of America's healthcare system.
- **Reaffirm** the centrality of compassion, empathy and service as core values of every faith tradition through interfaith solidarity.

**Gather at sunset on Friday, June 5, for a candlelight vigil to honor those already lost and the millions more who will certainly die if funding is not restored.**