

PHYSICAL ACTIVITY ALLIANCE



August 15, 2021

Senator Patty Murray
Chair, Senate Appropriations
Labor, Health and Human Services,
Education, and Related Agencies Subcommittee
Washington, DC 20510

Senator Roy Blunt
Ranking Member, Senate Appropriations
Labor, Health and Human Services,
Education, and Related Agencies Subcommittee
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Chair Murray and Ranking Member Blunt:

As organizations dedicated to improving the health of all Americans, we respectfully request that you allocate \$125 million for FY 2022 to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's (CDC) Division of Nutrition, Physical Activity and Obesity, which would include \$10 million for Active People Healthy Nation and \$15 million for the High Obesity Program initiative.

CDC's Division of Nutrition, Physical Activity, and Obesity (DNPAO) invests in effective strategies that support active living and healthy eating in states and communities across the nation. There is no more important time to invest in these priorities as our nation addresses the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic and its impact on chronic disease risk factors and mental health and well-being. Data indicate that a large majority of the population has experienced undesired weight gain during the pandemic at a time when the national obesity rate for adults has surpassed the 40% mark for the first time.¹ One cohort study in the US showed a 15% increase in obesity among children and adolescents during the pandemic.² To help prevent a potential onslaught of chronic disease as the nation emerges from the pandemic, we believe the funding allocation to the Division of Nutrition, Physical Activity and Obesity is more important than ever. Implementing DNPAO's programs can help prevent and address obesity and reduce the risk of chronic diseases, such as heart disease, diabetes, stroke, and cancer. Other potential benefits include better school performance, lower health care costs, stronger local economies, less air pollution, more cohesive communities, enhanced national security, and decreasing healthcare costs. For example, if everyone met current physical activity guidelines, Medicare could save \$73.9 billion per year.³

Currently, DNPAO funds a limited number of states and communities to support these effective evidence-based strategies. An increase in FY 2022 funding for DNPAO will allow CDC to fund all 50 states and D.C. and implement programs that could substantially reduce health care costs. While investments would support state-level entities, funding would be disseminated to individual communities to create more places for physical activity and increase access to healthy foods.

¹ Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Behavioral Risk Surveillance System. Accessed online August 11, 2021 at [Adult Obesity Facts | Overweight & Obesity | CDC](#).

² Stavridou, A. et al., Obesity in children and adolescents during COVID-19 pandemic. *Children (Basel)*. 2021 Feb; 8(2):135. [Obesity in Children and Adolescents during COVID-19 Pandemic \(nih.gov\)](#).

³ HHS FY2016 Budget in Brief, <https://www.hhs.gov/about/budget/budget-in-brief/cms/medicare/index.html>.

Active People Healthy Nation

Active People, Healthy Nation is a national initiative to help 27 million Americans become more physically active by 2027 by creating more places for people of all ages and abilities to be physically active including: Complete Streets; community plans for parks and recreation; safe routes to schools; safer, more accessible places for walking, moving and biking; and evidence-based physical activity interventions to prevent and control disease.

High Obesity Program

CDC funds the High Obesity program which enables land grant universities to work with community extension services to increase access to safe and accessible places for physical activity and healthier foods in counties that have more than 40% of adults with obesity.

Access to Healthy Foods

DNPAO supports maternity care practices and worksite supports for breastfeeding; implementation of food service guidelines in worksites and in community settings; and integration of nutrition standards into statewide early care and education (ECE) systems.

State Physical Activity and Nutrition Program

DNPAO funds the State Physical Activity and Nutrition Program (SPAN) which provides substantive levels of funding to implement evidence-based strategies at state and local levels to improve physical activity and nutrition. Currently only 16 states are supported, and it is estimated for each additional \$1.2 million in SPAN funding, an additional state could be added to the program.

We greatly appreciate your consideration of our request to provide \$125 million in FY 2021 for CDC's Division of Nutrition, Physical Activity and Obesity. This investment is critical to help public health officials and organizations support active living and healthy eating in states and communities across the nation. Implementing these initiatives and programs will help prevent obesity, reduce the risk of chronic diseases and lower healthcare costs.

Thank you for your consideration of this request and please reach out to Monte Ward (mward@acsm.org) if we can answer any further questions.

Sincerely,