September 21, 2021

The Honorable Nancy Pelosi
Speaker
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Charles Schumer
Majority Leader
U.S. Senate
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Frank Pallone
Chair
Committee on Energy and Commerce
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Patty Murray
Chair
Committee on Health, Education, Labor and Pensions
U.S. Senate
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Speaker Pelosi, Leader Schumer, Chairman Pallone, and Chair Murray:

The undersigned organizations representing the Data: Elemental to Health Campaign are grateful for the inclusion of $500 million in funding for CDC's public health Data Modernization Initiative (DMI) in the Energy and Commerce Committee's provisions of the Build Back Better Act. As our nation continues to respond to the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic, maintains our vigilance with other existing threats, and prepares the U.S. public health infrastructure for the next threat, access to timely and reliable public health data is critical. We urge you to include this funding in the HELP Committee's draft and maintain and pass this provision as the legislation advances in Congress.

The DMI is a commitment to building a world-class data workforce and data systems that are ready for any current or future public health emergency. We are grateful to Congress for providing nearly $1 billion to date for CDC's DMI through annual and supplemental appropriations. Additional funding through the Build Back Better Act will help to further prepare our public health data infrastructure at the local, state, tribal, territorial, and federal levels to respond quickly to any emerging threat.

The DMI facilitates the complete and timely reporting of data from health care to public health so that our public health system has essential data on race, ethnicity, pregnancy status, treatments, and co-morbidities that are critical for an effective public health response, while addressing important inequities in the burden of disease across the population. DMI builds on a set of guiding principles: an **enterprise approach** to data exchange, **interoperability** between public health and health care systems, **security** to protect patient data, a **workforce** empowered to build and maintain the systems, and **public private partnership** to drive innovation.

As we continue to battle COVID-19, it has become painfully clear that our public health data systems are in dire need of upgrades. We have learned many lessons from this pandemic, including that our public

health infrastructure and data systems were not prepared to respond to a highly infectious, fast-moving virus. COVID-19 will not be the last public health crisis to threaten our nation. We need public health data systems that are equipped to respond to this and any existing or future public health threat. The way to achieve this is through robust federal investments in public health infrastructure and data systems.

Thank you for including $500 million for data modernization in the Energy and Commerce reconciliation package. We strongly urge you to maintain this provision in final reconciliation legislation considered by the House of Representatives and the Senate. Our public health data infrastructure needs support to ensure we are operating public health systems and infrastructure, including at state and local health departments, that will keep pace with evolving technology and stand ready to combat any emerging threat to public health. If you have questions or wish to discuss this issue further, please contact Erin Morton at emorton@dc-crd.com.

Sincerely,

Association of Public Health Laboratories
Association of State and Territorial Health Officials
Big Cities Health Coalition
Council of State and Territorial Epidemiologists
Healthcare Information and Management Systems Society
National Association of County and City Health Officials
National Association for Public Health Statistics and Information Systems