



Association Of State And Territorial Health Officials  
2231 Crystal Drive, Suite 450 | Arlington, Virginia 22202  
(202) 371-9090 | [www.astho.org](http://www.astho.org)

December 24, 2008

The Honorable Barack Obama  
Obama-Biden Transition Team  
Washington, DC 20270

Dear President Elect Obama:

The Association of State and Territorial Health Officials (ASTHO), representing the 57 state and territorial health agencies, urges you to include significant investments in governmental public health as part of the economic stimulus package. Attached please find our recommendations for recovery package public health investments. Rebuilding our economic strength will depend upon a healthy and productive workforce. Protecting America's health must be a top priority.

Shrinking state health department budgets, brought on by the current economic downturn, are forcing cuts in critical public health programs and reductions in workforce that will have wide ranging effects. Reductions in public health programs such as childhood immunizations, disease preventions efforts, and newborn screening, just to name a few, are occurring across our nation.

In difficult economic times, when people lose their jobs and health insurance, health agencies are challenged to do even more to protect the public's health. Without adequate staff and other resources, we can not help people stay healthy and ensure a robust economy.

Public health departments are as critical a piece of the nation's infrastructure as roads and bridges. If the United States is to safeguard the health and vitality of its people, immediate investments in public health, as in all aspects of our infrastructure, are needed.

Thank you for considering our views. We welcome the opportunity to work with you to improve the public's health.

Sincerely,

Paul E. Jarris, MD, MBA  
Executive Director