



March 27, 2025

Dear Colleague:

I am writing to you as we are learning about [significant federal funding cuts](#) recently announced by the Trump administration. This cannot be downplayed: \$125 million in pledged investments to Illinois have been rescinded, and \$324 million in future funds were swept away. This federal funding was allocated to every state under the CARES (Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security) Act, bipartisan legislation passed to help the American people deal with the long-term impacts of the COVID-19 public health emergency.

Those impacts linger still, but funding for dozens of critical programs and grants that were supporting preparation for future public health emergencies have been abruptly cut off, with no published contingency plans in place.

While this funding was vital for the COVID response, it has also helped us continue to address COVID-19 and other outbreaks that may spread throughout our communities. The grant funding used millions of dollars for laboratory supplies and equipment, epidemiological surveillance, and mass vaccination initiatives. It covered testing for respiratory diseases beyond COVID-19, and surveillance for congregate care settings, like nursing homes, which house vulnerable, elderly populations. This funding was also designated for minority health initiatives as part of a broader commitment to health equity, and for ongoing immunization efforts aimed at addressing other infectious diseases like influenza and measles. Funding was also being invested in technology to track and identify public health threats.

The massive impact of the elimination of this funding will also be felt at the local level. As you know, IDPH passed through federal dollars in the form of grants to partners around the state, including most local health departments. The disruption in these funds will have a ripple effect on our work in every corner of Illinois.

These actions have cut off tens of millions of dollars that we, and you, had factored into our budgets for current and future fiscal years. There is no alternative to fully make up for these devastating cuts, and the consequence will be needless disruption to our shared, essential public health mission. These actions make the people of Illinois, and America, less safe and dramatically increase the risk of a future deadly outbreak.

It's not just that the funds have been taken away after they were allocated by Congress, it's that this action was announced with virtually no warning and no ability to develop contingency plans. We encourage all of our partners to contact their representatives in the U.S. House and Senate to express concern over these actions and to urge them to stand up for necessary investments in public health.

As this CARES Act funding is being slashed, the Trump administration has piled on with deep cuts to staffing and services at the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. These new layoffs, combined with earlier announced cuts, means a reduction of nearly one-fourth of the HHS workforce. I am deeply concerned about the loss of manpower, institutional knowledge, and the impact on the critical functions carried out by HHS.

As I have shared previously, IDPH is absolutely committed to doing everything in our power to protect the wellbeing of Illinoisans. That resolve has not changed, even as the federal government's actions make that mission more difficult by the day. I wish I could tell you that these cuts won't harm our work. Sadly, I can't say that. But I can assure you that we will redouble our efforts to carry out our mission, despite this reckless and dangerous action.

Yours in good health,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Sameer Vohra". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Sameer Vohra, MD, JD, MA

Director

Illinois Department of Public Health