Dear Chairman Blunt, Chairwoman DeLauro and Ranking Members Murray and Cole,

As organizations dedicated to improving the health of all Americans, we respectfully request that you allocate $125 million for FY 2021 to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention’s (CDC) Division on Nutrition, Physical Activity and Obesity, which includes $15 million in continued support for the High Obesity Program initiative.

CDC’s Division of Nutrition, Physical Activity, and Obesity (DNPAO) invests in effective strategies that support healthy eating and active living in states and communities across the nation. Implementing these programs can help prevent 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.

Currently, DNPAO funds a limited number of states and communities to support these effective evidence-based strategies. An increase in FY 2021 funding for DNPAO will allow CDC to fund all 50 states and D.C. and implement programs that could substantially reduce health care costs [1]. 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. These resources would also support the scale of evidence-based health interventions to prevent or control obesity, such as those tested in the Childhood Obesity Research Demonstration project.

**Active People Healthy Nation**

Active People, Healthy Nation [2] 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 and biking; and evidence-based physical activity interventions to prevent and control disease.

**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 nutrition and physical activity. 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.

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

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 healthy eating and active living 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. We greatly appreciate your consideration of this request and would be happy to discuss it further with you.

Sincerely,

[1] Inadequate levels of physical activity are associated with about $117 billion in annual healthcare costs. The estimated annual medical cost of obesity in the U.S. was $149 billion in 2016, half of those expenses paid by publicly financed Medicare and Medicaid programs. Low rates of breastfeeding add $3 billion a year to health care costs.

[2] Active People, Healthy Nation is a comprehensive national initiative led by CDC to help 27 million Americans become more physically active by 2027.
