October 4, 2018

The Honorable Alex M. Azar II
Secretary of Health and Human Services
U.S. Department of Health and Human Services
200 Independence Avenue, SW
Washington, DC 20201

Dear Secretary Azar,

The undersigned 110 health organizations are deeply concerned that funding to care for immigrant children—those forcibly separated from their parents at the border, and those detained in custody for extended periods of time—as a direct result of the administration’s immigration policies, is being drawn directly from money appropriated in fiscal year 2018 for public health and medical research. There is widespread support throughout the community to care for immigrant children and families, but redirecting funding from already underfunded programs is deeply concerning. We urge the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) to make public its plan to respond to and recover from this public health crisis, and to request that Congress provide the funding necessary, through annual or supplemental appropriations legislation, to ensure the health and wellbeing of children and families in the Department’s care.

Historically, the HHS Secretary has used his or her statutory authority to transfer funding to support new or unexpected priorities. What makes the current situation different, however, is it is the administration’s own policies that have necessitated these significant transfers. Further, the administration has proposed other policy changes that would allow for the indefinite detention of immigrant families and would have significant financial and human costs.

The decision to use the Secretary’s authority to cut public health and medical research programs is understandable given the immediacy of this crisis. We fear, however, that funding transfers to date are just the beginning. To the community’s knowledge, the administration has not yet submitted a comprehensive funding request to Congress to avoid future transfers, which is particularly concerning given that lawmakers have finalized funding for fiscal year 2019.

The health community is deeply troubled by the significant financial and human costs associated with the administration’s immigration policies. The undersigned organizations look forward to learning more about the Department’s plans and we stand ready to support the Department in securing the resources necessary to care for immigrant children and families.

Please contact Coalition for Health Funding Executive Director Emily Holubowich at eholubowich@dc-crd.com or 202-484-1100 if you require additional information, or have any questions.

Sincerely,

Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics
AcademyHealth
Advocates for Youth
AIDS United
American Academy of Dermatology Association
American Academy of Family Physicians
American Academy of Pediatrics
American Association for Dental Research
American Association for the Study of Liver Diseases
American Association of Colleges of Pharmacy
American College of Clinical Pharmacy
American College of Physicians
American Dental Education Association
American Federation of Teachers
American Health Quality Association
American Nurses Association
American Organization of Nurse Executives
American Physiological Society
American Psychological Association
American Public Health Association
American Society for Pharmacology & Experimental Therapeutics
American Society for Reproductive Medicine
American Society of Hematology
American Society of Pediatric Nephrology
American Society of Transplantation
American Society on Aging
American Thoracic Society
Asian & Pacific Islander American Health Forum
Asian Pacific Institute on Gender-Based Violence
Association for Prevention Teaching and Research
Association of Accredited Public Health Programs
Association of Asian Pacific Community Health Organizations
Association of Clinicians for the Underserved
Association of Maternal & Child Health Programs
Association of Nurses in AIDS Care
Association of Public Health Laboratories
Association of Schools and Programs of Public Health
Association of University Centers on Disabilities
Association of Women's Health, Obstetric and Neonatal Nurses
Autism Society of America
Autistic Self Advocacy Network
Big Cities Health Coalition
Black Women's Health Imperative
Children's Hospital of Philadelphia
Children’s Mental Health Network
Coalition for Health Funding
Cooley’s Anemia Foundation
Council of State and Territorial Epidemiologists
DC Coalition Against Domestic Violence
Digestive Disease National Coalition
Endocrine Society
Every Child By Two
First Focus
Frannie Peabody Center
Global Healthy Living Foundation
Healthy Teen Network
Hep B United
Hep Free Hawaii
Hepatitis B Foundation
HIV Medicine Association
Immunization Action Coalition
Immunize Nevada
Impetus - Let’s Get Started LLC
In Our Own Voice: National Black Women’s Reproductive Justice Agenda
Infectious Diseases Society of America
Jeffrey Modell Foundation
Jewish Women International
Justice in Aging
Lupus and Allied Diseases Association, Inc.
Lymphatic Education & Research Network
March of Dimes
Moore Center for the Prevention of Child Sexual Abuse at the Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health
NAADAC, the Association for Addiction Professionals
NAPHSIS
NASTAD
National Association of Councils on Developmental Disabilities
National Association of County and City Health Officials
National Association of Pediatric Nurse Practitioners
National Birth Defects Prevention Network
National Black Nurses Association
National Coalition Against Domestic Violence
National Coalition of STD Directors
National Council on Aging
National Hispanic Medical Association
National Network of Public Health Institutes
National Network to End Domestic Violence
National Nurse-Led Care Consortium
National Organization for Women
National Resource Center on Domestic Violence
National Women’s Health Network
New Voices for Reproductive Justice
NMAC
Physician Assistant Education Association
Planned Parenthood Federation of America
Prevent Blindness
Prevention Institute
Public Health Management Corporation
Ryan White Medical Providers Coalition
Safe States Alliance
Society for Public Health Education
Society of General Internal Medicine
Southern HIV/AIDS Strategy Initiative
The Arc of the United States
The Consortium
The Gerontological Society of America
Treatment Action Group
Trust for America's Health
UCLA Department of Health Policy and Management
Ujima Inc.: The National Center on Violence Against Women in the Black Community
URGE: Unite for Reproductive & Gender Equity
Women of Color Network, Inc.