

# Inter-County Association of Western New York

*Representing the Counties of Allegany, Cattaraugus, Cayuga, Chautauqua, Chemung, Erie, Genesee, Livingston, Monroe, Niagara, Ontario, Orleans, Schuyler, Seneca, Steuben, Tompkins, Wayne, Wyoming, and Yates.*

## **RESOLUTION NO. 2021-13-IC**

### **MEMORIALIZING THE GOVERNOR AND NEW YORK STATE LEGISLATURE TO SUPPORT ALLOCATING UNRESTRICTED RESOURCES TO LOCAL HEALTH DEPARTMENTS TO FORTIFY THE PROVISION OF CORE PUBLIC HEALTH SERVICES AND PREPARE FOR IMPLEMENTATION OF EXPANDED PUBLIC HEALTH MANDATES**

Offered by: the Inter-County Association of Western New York

**WHEREAS**, local health departments are New York State's partners and operational extensions, working in the forefront of communities, addressing public health issues and serving as the first line of defense against all public health crises by protecting communities and residents; and

**WHEREAS**, activities led by the 58 local health departments are paramount to our collective ability to achieve Prevention Agenda goals, address health disparities, improve health outcomes and ensure community safety and stability; and

**WHEREAS**, Directors and Commissioners of Public Health are health strategists within their respective counties, with the unparalleled expertise needed to apply knowledge, bridge competency gaps, lead multi-sector health improvements, and identify vulnerable populations; and

**WHEREAS**, un- and under-funded public health mandates continue to emerge routinely, including monitoring of contaminants in drinking water, registration of cooling towers, lowering of the elevated blood lead level in children (EBLL), and, most recently, all activities related to the COVID-19 response; and

**WHEREAS**, the state aid share for core public health services has not kept up with growing public health needs, nor has it supported the implementation of new and expanded state mandates, has not received an increase in core public health aid in more than six years, nor have they received adequate compensation needed to respond to emerging health issues; and

**WHEREAS**, during the 2020-2021 State Budget Session, New York State became the epicenter of a global pandemic that has required a surge in and restructuring of the existing public health and health care infrastructure to ensure control of the virus and equitable distribution of COVID-19 vaccines; and

**WHEREAS**, New York State has legalized regulated cannabis, which will lead to increased response including education, surveillance, public awareness, and oversight by local health departments; and

**WHEREAS**, the public health workforce employed within local health departments are first responders, working at the forefront of communities during times of need and when emerging health issues occur, such as COVID-19 response; and

**WHEREAS**, State Budget appropriations for public health spending has been reduced year after year, and new funding streams for emergency response activities are frequently accompanied with stringent federal spending or supplanting restrictions, which impacts how funds can be utilized and reduces flexibility to respond to local community needs; and

**WHEREAS**, as demonstrated during the COVID-19 response, the public health workforce is central to New York State's public health infrastructure yet is dwindling due to public-sector budget restraints, competition, a surplus of workers who are approaching retirement, the inability to recruit new workers in all areas throughout the state -- all of which culminate in significant workforce retention challenges; and

**WHEREAS**, New York State does not allow local health departments to recover any of its necessary fringe expenses for local health department personnel under Article 6, therefore creating a barrier to hiring new staff; and

**WHEREAS**, a thorough assessment of the full fiscal implications of any new policy is crucial if the state desires to maintain the promise made to local taxpayers through the 2 percent state property tax cap and if the state wishes to deliver on new public health promises that they want to implement through state statute and regulations; and

**WHEREAS**, now, more than ever, is the time for a call to action to evaluate and allocate the resources that are truly needed to further expand public health and safety infrastructure in New York State, further demonstrating the State's commitment to pass progressive public health policy and thereby protect the residents of New York State. Now, therefore, be it

**RESOLVED:**

1. That the Inter-County Association of Western New York joins the New York State Association of Counties (NYSAC) and the New York State Association of County Health Officials (NYSACHO) in calling upon the Governor and New York State Legislature to provide resources, flexibility and support to local health departments within County and New York City Governments by:
  - a. Allocating unrestricted, flexible funding to local health departments so they have the resources needed to respond to threats like COVID-19;
  - b. Restoring Article 6 reimbursement to New York City at 36%, the same rate as the rest of the state;
  - c. Extending the Imminent Threat to Public Health declaration as we continue to respond to COVID-19 beyond December 31, 2020;
  - d. Securing the restoration of the 20% withholding that New York State is making on all state reimbursements;
  - e. Providing 100% reimbursement for the first full year of any new and/or significantly expanded public health mandates emerging from law, rule or regulation; and
2. That the Inter-County Association of Western New York Secretary is directed to send a certified copy of this resolution to state representatives and all others deemed necessary and appropriate.

*This is to Certify that I*, the undersigned, Secretary of the Inter-County Association of Western New York, have compared the foregoing copy of resolution with the original resolution now on file in this office and which was duly adopted by the Association at a session held on the 21<sup>st</sup> day of May 2021 and that the same is a true copy of said original and of the whole thereof.

*In Witness Whereof*, I have hereunto subscribed my name and affixed the official seal of the Inter-County Association of Western New York dated May 21, 2021.



Jodi Adams, Secretary  
Inter-County Association of Western New York



Sponsored by: Steuben County, Moved by: C. Ferratella (*Steuben*), Seconded by: M. Rondinaro (*Schuylers*)