

## 2017-2019 BUDGET REQUEST: COMMUNICABLE DISEASE CONTROL INITIATIVE

### TOPIC:

Currently there are no dedicated, stable funding sources to local health boards for surveillance, investigation, control and prevention of communicable diseases under S.251.05(2)(a) and S.252.03(1).

### REQUEST:

Create a continuing appropriation of \$2,500,000 per fiscal year (for a total of \$5,000,000 over the 2017-19 biennium) for communicable disease control and prevention in Wisconsin. The Wisconsin Department of Health Services shall distribute funds to local health departments to use for communicable disease control and prevention measures through disease surveillance, contact tracing, staff development and training, improving communication among health care professionals, public education and outreach, and other infection control measures as required by law. The department must take into consideration certain factors, such as base allocation, general population, target populations, risk factors and geographic area to establish an equitable allocation formula for the distribution of funds.

### RATIONALE:

One of the highest priorities for public health in Wisconsin and across the country is efforts to prevent and control communicable diseases, including traditional, ever present diseases, such as Tuberculosis, Hepatitis C, Influenza and Pneumonia, and emerging disease threats like Zika, Elizabethkingia, Ebola, Middle East Respiratory Syndrome and other global diseases that require a local public health response. Supporting a robust public health infrastructure is critical in a globalized world that provides new opportunities for the emergence and spread of infectious disease. **Unfortunately, Wisconsin currently has no dedicated, stable funding source for communicable disease control and prevention for local health departments.** As a result, local health departments are challenged with a lack of sufficient staff and resources, which are necessary to support effective infectious disease prevention efforts. This can lead to delays in basic follow-up, case reporting and contact tracing investigations, which could allow opportunistic diseases to spread and become a crisis.

### DISCUSSION POINTS:

- Emerging and existing communicable diseases threaten health security, the economy and quality of life for all Wisconsin citizens. Yet, Wisconsin currently has no dedicated, stable funding source for communicable disease control and prevention efforts.
- According to Trust for America's Health, Wisconsin ranks 41<sup>st</sup> in the nation for state public health funding for local health departments and invests only \$15.10 per capita. The national average is \$39.32 per capita.
- The challenges presented by infectious disease are more complex than they were even a decade ago. New microbes and mutated versions of old ones are being discovered regularly, creating real threats to the United States – including Wisconsin – in today's globalized world.
- Supporting a strong public health infrastructure is paramount with the continuing occurrences of natural disasters, terrorist attacks, increased drug use and infectious diseases, such as tuberculosis, whooping cough, H1N1 influenza, and Hepatitis C.
- Between 2011-2015, the Department of Health Services reported a 450% increase in acute Hepatitis C (HCV) cases, the majority due to drug use. Also in 2015, there were 994 HCV infections reported among people aged 15-29 in Wisconsin, which is an increase of 115% in the past five years.
- While a \$5 million investment in communicable disease funding amounts to less than \$1 per capita, it would have a major impact across the state, allowing local health departments to improve disease surveillance, enhance staff training and strengthen public awareness plans.