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# CITY OF NEW YORK MANHATTAN COMMUNITY BOARD 10

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March 14, 2025

The Honorable Charles E. Schumer  
The Honorable Kirsten Gillibrand  
United States Senate  
Washington DC 20510

Dear Senator Schumer and Senator Gillibrand,

I write today to express support for the FY 2026 Congressionally Directed Spending Request (CDSR) submitted by CUNY SPH. With this funding, CUNY SPH will create a new Public Health Emergency Preparedness and Response Training Hub (PHEPR-TH).

As of 2023, the U.S. public health workforce needed 80,000 additional full-time workers in state and local settings, primarily in health departments, to provide core services. An additional loss of 129,000 workers is projected by this year, with updated data expected in summer 2025. Even more public health workers, who are typically not counted in official reports, are needed in non-governmental organizations. In New York State alone, a 2022 workforce study by the New York State Association of County Health Officials (NYSACHO) revealed a 26% decline in full-time local health department (LHD) employees since 2019, with temporary federal and state emergency funding creating an unstable influx of short-term staff for COVID-19 response efforts. As these employees are not permanent and leave when funding runs out, LHDs will face a significant loss of staff and experience, even as they continue to manage current, emergent, and unforeseen public health threats. More than ever, this entire workforce needs training in public health and healthcare emergency response and preparedness.

CUNY SPH's PHEPR-TH is uniquely positioned to meet demand in the current and future public health workforce. PHEPR-TH will be available to graduate students, public health and safety professionals, and community members who wish to develop or strengthen their skills and credentials for career advancement to address future emergencies with a sound scientific basis. The PHEPR-TH will establish a new certificate program in Public Health Emergency Preparedness and Response at CUNY SPH that can serve the growing need for training in PHEPR among the public health and healthcare workforce that is unique in its curriculum and community connections. The PHEPR-TH will expand CUNY SPH program offerings, attract new students to public health, further career and professional training for graduate students and professionals, and fill a major gap in the public health and healthcare workforce. Moreover, given CUNY SPH's strong online curriculum, this training will be accessible locally, nationally, and internationally, broadening its reach. Federal funding is vital for CUNY SPH to launch the training hub, and will support your constituents with:

- Increased access to knowledge and skills that are in-demand from employers
- Training to fill current and future positions paying living wages in the public health workforce
- Increased ability to serve their community and protect its well-being in times of acute need

Manhattan Community Board 10 voted unanimously to support the creation of a hub by the CUNY School for Public Health during the March General Board Meeting on March 5, 2025. We are confident that communities, particularly in Harlem and many others, will benefit from the increased workforce training PHEPR-TH will provide, both as participants and as recipients of the services those trained can offer. I encourage you to move this proposal forward to the Appropriations Committee and vigorously support it throughout the process.

Sincerely,

Marquis Harrison, Board Chair  
Manhattan Community Board 10