

Assemblymember Amy Paulin
Legislative Office Building, Room 822
Albany, NY 12248

Assemblymember J. Gary Pretlow
Legislative Office Building, Room 923
Albany, NY 12248

Senator Liz Krueger
State Capitol Building, Room 416
Albany, NY 12247

Senator Gustavo Rivera
Capitol Building, Room 502C
Albany, NY 12247

February 22, 2026

RE: Healthy Neighborhoods Program Restoration FY 26-27

Dear Assemblymember Paulin, Assemblymember Pretlow, Senator Krueger and Senator Rivera:

On behalf of the undersigned organizations, we write to ask you to restore the proposed elimination of \$1.45 million for the Healthy Neighborhoods Program (HNP) in the State Fiscal Year 2026–2027 Enacted Budget.

The Healthy Neighborhoods Program is a proven, evidence-based public health initiative administered by local health departments that delivers direct, no-cost, in-home education, assessments, and safety interventions to reduce preventable injuries, asthma triggers, lead exposure, and other housing-related health risks. HNP addresses some of the most significant and preventable drivers of poor health by ensuring that residents can live safely and independently in their homes.

Access to safe, healthy, and stable housing is a fundamental determinant of health. Housing-related hazards contribute significantly to preventable injury, illness, emergency department utilization, and avoidable health care costs. HNP functions as an upstream prevention and housing stabilization strategy, reducing emergency responses, preventing displacement, and preserving existing housing stock, particularly for low-income households, older adults, families with young children, and individuals disproportionately impacted by social and economic conditions.

Despite its documented positive outcomes in fire safety, fall prevention for older adults, asthma management, and aging safely in place, the Executive Budget proposes eliminating \$1.45 million in funding for this program. Eighteen localities across New York State, including New York City and multiple counties, currently rely on HNP funding to support trained public health staff and provide essential injury prevention education and safety equipment, including smoke and carbon monoxide detectors, fire extinguishers, radon detectors, and supplies to reduce lead hazards and asthma triggers.

Eliminating Healthy Neighborhoods funding would result in workforce disruptions within local health departments, with the immediate loss of 32 full time employees (FTEs), undermining local public health capacity, and increase downstream costs to emergency services, health care systems, and local governments. At a time when families across New York are struggling to find and remain in safe, affordable housing, cutting one of the State's most effective housing-based prevention programs is counterproductive and fiscally short-sighted.

We respectfully ask the Legislature to restore funding for the Healthy Neighborhoods Program in their FY 2026–27 one-house bills, and the Enacted Budget. Continued investment in this program is essential to protecting vulnerable populations, preserving the public health workforce, reducing preventable injuries and illnesses, and advancing the goals of the New York State Prevention Agenda.

Please contact Sarah Ravenhall, Executive Director, the New York State Association of County Health Officials at sravenhall@nysacho.org, 518-475-8905 in the event you have questions or need more information.

Thank you for your leadership and for your continued commitment to protecting the health and safety of New Yorkers.

Sincerely,

Stephen J. Acquario, Executive Director, the New York State Association of Counties

Kyle Belokopitsky, Executive Director, New York State PTA

Shannon Burkett RN IBCLC, Advocate, Mother of a Lead Affected Child and Podcast creator, enleadpoisoning.org

Rose Duhan, CEO, Community Health Care Association of New York State

Brett Harris, DrPH, President, New York State Public Health Association

Gabrielle Gonzales, Coordinator, Lead Free Kids NY Coalition

Graham Hughes, Director of Policy & Advocacy, Climate Solutions Accelerator of the Genesee-Finger Lakes Region

Naima Mahamoud, Community Health Worker (Monroe County H. D.)

Charles Moon III, MD FAAP, Environmental Health Policy Coordinator, New York State Chapter of the American Academy of Pediatrics

Lorraine Parr, Community Health Worker of the Monroe County Health Department

Sarah Ravenhall, MHA, CHES, Executive Director, NYSACHO

Clare Robinson-Henrie, Program Director, Coalition to Prevent Lead Poisoning at Causewave Community Partners

Mike Seilback, Assistant Vice-President, Nationwide Advocacy, State Public Policy, American Lung Association

Joshua Terry, Director of Legislative & Political Action, Civil Service Employees Association (CSEA)

Bobbi Wilding, Executive Director, Clean+Healthy

CC:

Dr. James McDonald, Commissioner, New York State Department of Health