Template Letter of Support for a California Wellness Fund Budget Request

[Template letter to be placed on your organizaton’s letterhead]

The Honorable Joaquin Arambula, MD

Chair, Assembly Budget Subcommittee #1 on Health and Human Services

State Capitol Building, Room 6026

Sacramento, CA 95814

The Honorable Richard Pan, MD

Chair, Senate Budget Subcommittee #3 on Health and Human Services

State Capitol Building, Room 5019

Sacramento, CA 95814

[Date]

Subject: **Support for California Wellness Fund budget proposal**

Dear Doctors Arambula and Pan,

[This organization] supports the California Wellness Fund budget proposal. [insert text on your organization].

This budget proposal is a one-time allocation of general funds in order to begin a roll-out of a statewide initiative to promote health equity and prevent key risk factors for leading causes of illness and premature death. This investment of $10 per capita represents less than 1/1000th of what California spends on health care. Investing in healthier communities can keep people from needing health care in the first place, keeping health care costs down while improving quality of life.

These funds are needed to implement strategies we know work. Local health departments and community -based organizations know how to significantly reduce risks for the leading causes of illness, injury, and premature death including heart disease, diabetes, and dementia. These diseases have common risk factors beginning in early childhood and continuing on to older adults. Unfortunately, we do not have adequate resources to scale and sustain effective programs to address these risk factors. Limited state, federal, and private funding for disease prevention is sporadic, siloed, and declining.

The California Wellness Fund will provide resources to local health departments and community organizations, including clinics and tribes, initially in a subset of jurisdictions in Northern, Central, and Southern California, using indices of health inequities to focus resources on the most vulnerable residents and communities. Recipients will work together and use local needs assessments to implement evidence-based and community-guided strategies across the lifespan to improve access to healthy food and safe drinking water, increase opportunities to be physically active, and promote safer and healthier neighborhoods. Rigorous evaluation and accountability will measure changes in key risks for preventable illness and injury in communities with the greatest health inequities.

A California Wellness Fund ultimately will benefit all Californians. This budget proposal will reach only a part of the state’s population, but it will lay the groundwork for a statewide effort to scale-up the fight against preventable chronic disease, promote health equity, and improve California for all. Our state’s vision for the future of health must include not only covering all Californians in times of illness, but also assuring critical investments to keep people from getting sick in the first place. We strongly urge you to support the California Wellness Fund.

Sincerely,

[Your signature and title]

*Please email your letter to Kat DeBurgh, Executive Director of the Health Officers Association of California: deburgh@calhealthofficers.org*

*Kat will deliver the letters to Assembly member Arambula, Senator Pan, and members of the Assembly and Senate Budget Subcommittees on Health and Human Services*