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Healthy People Build Strong Communities

Public Comments by Dennis Kriesel with the Kansas Association of Local Health Departments (KALHD) to the

Human Services Subcommittee, Senate Ways and Means

Kansas Department of Health and Environment Budget • February 3, 2022

Madam Chair McGinn and Members of the Subcommittee:

Thank you for the opportunity to speak today regarding the Kansas Department of Health and Environment's (KDHE's) budget. My name is Dennis Kriesel, and I am the Executive Director of the Kansas Association of Local Health Departments (KALHD). KALHD is a nonprofit association dedicated to strengthening local health departments for the purpose of improving and protecting the health of all Kansans.

KALHD is requesting the committee consider adding \$1.6 million, all via the State General Fund, in FY 2023 to Aid to Local Health Departments for statutory formula distribution as listed under KDHE's Division of Public Health. The Governor's budget allocates \$3.2 million¹ for such Aid to Local Health Departments in FY 2023. This enhancement would raise the total allocation to \$4.8 million.

Thanks to the support of this subcommittee, this statutory formula aid (commonly referred to as the State Formula) did receive a \$1 million increase, the first in 29 years, and I thank you for that support. We asked for \$2.6 million (based on adjusting the 1992 value for inflation and population increases), and thus we are here today requesting the remaining \$1.6 million left from that initial ask.

This State Formula funding is discretionary in its use, meaning local health departments can use it to help with a host of important public health functions including disease investigation and control, school inspections, immunizations, enforcement of nuisance laws, and environmental health functions. But the work of local health departments goes much further. Local health departments serve as the chief health strategists for their communities, providing services identified as community needs (such as senior services, home visitation, car seat safety, and many more) and functioning to educate local populations about health issues and providing key emergency preparedness functions and readiness.

Thank you for listening and considering this enhancement request to KDHE's Division of Health budget. I will stand for questions at the appropriate time.

Sincerely,

Dennis Kriesel

Executive Director, Kansas Association of Local Health Departments

¹ See page 116 of The Governor's Budget Report, Volume 1, Fiscal Year 2023