

Public Health and Disaster Response Task Force

Improving the Nation's Response for Future Public Health Emergencies

On April 20, 2022, the Public Health and Disaster Response Task Force sent a [letter](#) to the Senate HELP Committee Chair Murray and Ranking Member Burr, providing feedback on the bipartisan PREVENT Pandemics Act (S.3799). This bill is in response to COVID-19 and tries to address some of the lessons learned from the response and seeks to improve the nation's preparedness for future public health emergencies. The letter highlights five top issues:

- Federal-State Roles and Responsibilities
- Improve Communication and Messaging
- Modernize and Standardize Public Health Data Systems
- Strengthen Public Health Infrastructure and Workforce
- Sustainable Availability and Reliable Access to Health Care Supply Chain

Briefings for States and Territories

The National Governors Association has hosted dozens of calls in response to state and territorial concerns, including unwinding of the various federal and state emergency declarations and the enhanced cybersecurity threat in the face of Russia's invasion of Ukraine. We have worked to partner with external experts from the public and private sectors to provide accurate and timely information to states and territories on vaccines, testing, cybersecurity and several other key issues.

Maintaining Funding for the National Guard and Public Assistance

The Pandemic and Disaster Response Task Force [continued to advocate](#) for the use of Title 32 in response to COVID-19 as well as the full funding for the National Guard and the FEMA Public Assistance Program. The Task Force was able to successfully advocate for a 3-month extension of the authority to July 1, 2022, that provided states and territories additional time to prepare. [NGA Statement Commending Extension of Title 32 and 100 Percent Cost Share.](#)

Appropriations

The Public Health and Disaster Response Task Force wrote to congressional appropriators requesting several of Governors' top priorities in the Fiscal Year 2023 appropriations bills. These requests included reimbursing the National Guard for COVID-19 and the U.S. Capitol missions; funding the modernization and recapitalization of National Guard equipment; strong investment in state opioid response and substance abuse prevention efforts; strengthening access to maternal health and child care; preparedness and hazard mitigation grants; promoting investment in National Guard Full-Time Support; and the Counterdrug program. [NGA Letter of FY23 Appropriations Priorities.](#)

Implementing a Dedicated Cybersecurity Grant for States and Territories

On Nov. 15, 2021, President Biden signed into law the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act. The measure includes a critical priority for states and territories: a \$1 billion, four-year cybersecurity grant program designed to help state, local, tribal and territorial entities improve their cyber posture. This grant has been a multi-year effort for the National Governors Association, and the Task Force will continue to work with the Administration on implementation of guidance. [Coalition Letter on Cybersecurity Funding](#)



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In addition, NGA has stayed engaged with state and federal stakeholders to provide recommendations for implementing the grant program to the Cybersecurity and Infrastructures Security Agency (CISA) and the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA). Additionally, the Task Force held a briefing for Governors' offices to provide an update on this critical grant program and the current cybersecurity threat landscape.

National Guard Support & Title 32

The Public Health and Disaster Response Task Force continued to advocate for Governors' top priorities in support of a strong National Guard. The Co-chairs engaged with senior federal officials to advance efforts in the FY22 National Defense Authorization Act for the Department of Defense to conduct a long overdue evaluation of Title 32 authorities and urge for the recommendation to Congress to codify the authority to request National Guard activation under Section 502(f)(2). [NGA Letter on Title 32 report](#).