

February 20, 2015

Michael C. Lu, M.D., M.S., M.P.H.  
Associate Administrator, Maternal and Child Health  
Health Resources and Services Administration  
U.S. Department of Health and Human Services  
5600 Fishers Lane  
Room 18-05  
Rockville, MD 20857

Dear Dr. Lu:

The Association of Schools and Programs of Public Health (ASPPH) is strongly supportive of the vital programs managed by the HRSA's Maternal and Child Health Bureau. The Bureau is currently seeking applications for two such important programs:

- Maternal and Child Health Public Health Catalyst Program (HRSA-15-133)
- Centers of Excellence in Maternal and Child Health in Education, Science and Practice (HRSA-15-097)

While we have no desire to disrupt the current funding competition, we respectfully request that the Bureau reconsider the eligibility criteria for these two programs when the programs' Funding Opportunity Announcements (FOAs) are next reissued.

Specifically, we request that both FOAs be amended to allow both Council on Education for Public Health accredited schools **and programs** of public health to be eligible to apply for and be awarded such grants.

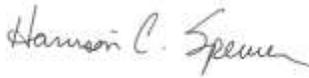
As you know, the Council on Education for Public Health (CEPH) is the independent agency recognized by the U.S. Department of Education to accredit schools of public health and public health programs outside schools of public health, and which has been in existence since 1974. In the years since these two maternal and child health programs were created, CEPH has accredited many more programs in public health. These programs play the same educational role as schools of public health, with schools generally offering a comprehensive curriculum while programs, being a subset of another college within the university, often specialize in a specific discipline. Both schools and programs must meet the same set of rigorous accreditation standards as set by the Department of Education's recognized accrediting body, the Council on Education for Public Health.

ASPPH represents both CEPH-accredited schools and programs. Both the schools and programs in our membership support these changes. As such, we do not believe there is any external opposition to this modification.

Our review of the statutory basis for these programs leads us to believe that this matter is entirely within the jurisdiction of HRSA and there is no legal impediment to the change. Moreover, we think that the objectives of the programs will be enhanced by a more inclusive eligibility criteria.

We appreciate your support of these important programs over the years and welcome the opportunity to address any questions you might have on this proposed modification.

Sincerely,



Harrison C. Spencer, MD, MPH, CPH  
President and CEO

CC: Laura Kavanagh, MPP, Director, Division of MCH Workforce Development