Contact:

Michelle Forman (APHL): michelle.forman@aphl.org
Jane Esworthy (ASTHO): jesworthy@astho.org
Jeremy Arieh (CSTE): jarieh@cste.org
Morgan Searles (HIMSS): morgan.searles@himss.org
Shawna Webster (NAPHSIS): swebster@naphsis.org

Statement:

The members of the Data: Elemental to Health campaign applaud Congress and President Biden for enacting the American Rescue Plan, which provides much needed relief from the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic. Specifically, we are grateful for the inclusion of essential funding to support the public health Data Modernization Initiative (DMI) at the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC).

Years before COVID-19 struck, our organizations identified significant gaps in our nation's public health surveillance systems that curtailed our ability to effectively and efficiently respond to emerging public health threats. To provide the necessary upgrades to our public health data systems we called for a foundational investment of $1 billion and sustained annual funding to keep systems up to date with evolving technology.

Unsurprisingly, COVID-19 exposed the shortfalls of our antiquated public health data systems. We need an interoperable, high-speed, network to move information from health care to public health—from laboratories to health care facilities to public health authorities—with fast and reliable data in order to protect Americans from health threats. The American Rescue Plan, which includes $500 million in funding for DMI and infectious disease epidemic forecasting and analytics, will help us get there.

Modernization is a commitment to building a world-class data workforce and data systems that are ready for the next public health emergency. We thank Congress and the administration for providing a robust investment in upgrading our public health surveillance system and look forward to working with them to ensure sustained long-term investments in our public health surveillance systems help us better respond to the next threat.

Association of Public Health Laboratories
Association of State and Territorial Health Officials
Council of State and Territorial Epidemiologists
Healthcare Information and Management Systems Society
National Association of Public Health Statistics and Information Systems