

The Consortium of Universities for Global Health (CUGH) Calls for Evidence-Based Evaluations of Nominees for Key Public Health Leadership Roles

The national security of the United States and our competitiveness in world markets depends on a healthy, skilled, and economically productive workforce. And a healthy, productive workforce requires a strong, effective, science-driven public health system that safeguards the health and well-being of all Americans, prevents disease, and enables us to thrive across our lifetimes. Considering the recent nomination for the position of Secretary of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, the Consortium of Universities in Global Health (CUGH) urges a nonpartisan, evidence-based approach to the evaluation of the nominee for this position. CUGH is a coalition of institutions around the world, dedicated to improving the wellbeing of people and the planet through education, research, service and advocacy. Grounded in our mission, we emphasize the importance of transparency, scientific rigor, and engaging diverse viewpoints in assessing any nominee for a high-ranking national position, especially this one which is pivotal to securing our nation's health and that of communities globally.

Political leadership plays a critical role in addressing complex global challenges, such as public health, climate change, and international cooperation. Therefore, it is essential that the nominee is evaluated based on their policies, track record, and commitment to evidence-based decision-making. CUGH emphasizes that public health leaders should be committed to upholding the highest standards of scientific accuracy to maintain public trust. While the nomination of any candidate represents the right to free political expression, it also calls for a rigorous examination of their views and policy positions. All nominees should demonstrate a commitment to decision-making based on established scientific consensus.

Key Questions Raised by the CUGH:

- **Public Health Policies:** Given the importance of public health in the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic and imminent threat posed by H5N1, will the candidate ensure that their positions and action are aligned with the best available scientific evidence to protect the health of U.S. communities?
- **Climate Change and Environmental Sustainability:** What are the candidate's commitments to addressing the pressing issue of climate change and fostering sustainable development?
- **Evidence-Based Decision Making:** How does the candidate plan to engage with experts and scientific bodies to inform their policy decisions, particularly in areas where misinformation can have serious adverse health consequences?

The United States needs a Secretary of Health and Human Services who can address the complex health challenges facing the country: the rise of non-communicable diseases, an aging population, pollution, the impact of climate change on health, and the pervasive threat of an infectious disease pandemic. As we saw with the COVID-19 pandemic, viruses and other disease agents know no borders. The health of our nation is interconnected to that of other nations and a strong global public health system, backed by collaborative international relationships is in our own and everyone's interest. The public needs a Secretary of Health and Human Services who helps sustain and amplify the United States' contributions to improving global health and its determinants. Government policies and regulations must be supported by science and evidence-based policies.

We strongly urge the Senate to prioritize evidence-based evaluations during the confirmation process to ensure the appointment of a leader who is fully committed to advancing the health and well-being of our nation. CUGH stands ready to collaborate with leaders across the political spectrum to advance policies that enhance the health and well-being of people in the United States and globally, ensuring a healthier, more sustainable future for all.

About CUGH

The Consortium of Universities in Global Health (CUGH) is an alliance of higher education institutions, associations and partners dedicated to improving the wellbeing of people and the planet through research, education, service, and advocacy. The Consortium is a nonpartisan, 501c3 organization based in Washington, DC. It is committed to fostering an informed and engaged global citizenry.

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