

JOE MANCHIN III
WEST VIRGINIA

SUITE 306
HART BUILDING
WASHINGTON, DC 20510
(202) 224-3954

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510-4804

COMMITTEES

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April 22, 2021

Ms. Sherri A. Berger, MSPH
Acting Chief of Staff
Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC)
1600 Clifton Rd.
Atlanta, GA 30329-4027

Dear Ms. Berger,

I am writing to express my enthusiastic support for the Community Education Group (CEG) and Rural Health Service Providers Network's (RHSPN) *Lessons Learned, Lessons Applied* initiative. The CEG is seeking funding from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) for a three year phased, multi-pronged COVID-19 prevention, education, preparedness and vaccination program that will both harness existing HIV, Hepatitis, and Substance Use Disorder (SUD) infrastructures in rural America and extend those infrastructures for disease prevention and healthcare sustainability. I understand that CEG plans to implement *Lessons Learned, Lessons Applied* in the following manner:

Lessons Learned, Lessons Applied is a community resiliency model that relies on West Virginia's effective COVID-19 vaccine distribution, as well as CEG's nearly three decades of work in HIV/HCV community engagement, training and technical assistance, and willingness-to-participate in HIV vaccine trial research, to ensure that West Virginia's more than 40 designated rural counties are protected. Additionally, through CDC support, their residents and frontline organizations have access to COVID-19 prevention education materials, COVID-19 vaccines and knowledge, and resources to improve organizational stability and sustainability to react to the COVID-19 pandemic's effect. Rural and geographically disconnected clients and groups are having trouble accessing and delivering critical health services as a result of social distancing and service shutdowns in West Virginia.

This unique funding opportunity will allow CEG to expand its reach into West Virginia's rural, disadvantaged, indigent, and minority communities, as well as the rest of Appalachia and the nation. It would also allow them to bring a number of jobs at various levels to a state in desperate need.

I sincerely appreciate you noting my interest in this request and affording it a full and fair review. Thank you in advance for your consideration and please feel free to contact me, or Audrey Smith (audrey_smith@manchin.senate.gov) from my staff, if you have any questions regarding this request.

Sincerely,



Joe Manchin III
United States Senator

JMIII/ph