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**Laid Off Public Health Workers Excluded from Senate Stimulus,  
Governmental Health Laboratories Slammed by Recession**

Silver Spring, MD—"The Senate compromise version of H.R. 1, the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009, provides no relief to the thousands of state and local government public health workers laid off because of the economic downturn – including those who work in laboratories," said Scott Becker, Executive Director of the Association of Public Health Laboratories. "Unfortunately, the Senate has decided that these workers shouldn't be included in the 4 million jobs that President Obama wants to save or create," said Becker. "We urge the conferees to retain the House language providing \$3 billion for prevention and wellness."

"A recent APHL survey of the directors of state and local member laboratories found a number of disturbing trends which ultimately endanger America's health," continued Becker. "Specifically, 80% of respondents have contended with reduced levels of state funding since January 1, 2008."

Some key survey findings:

- Approximately 96% of government laboratories made these reductions because of the recent economic downturn. APHL estimates government laboratories nationwide have seen their budgets cut by approximately \$39 million.
- Laboratories nationwide either laid off or left unfilled an estimated 429 full-time employees/positions and expect to see another 246 layoffs/unfilled positions in 2009.
- Eighty-four percent of government laboratories were forced to reduce their spending on much-needed supplies and equipment, for an estimated spending reduction of \$14 million nationwide.

"We hoped the Senate would follow the wise lead of the House and provide significant funding increases that would keep these workers employed and allow them to provide critical public health services," said Becker. "Programs that protect public health by testing for tuberculosis, hepatitis, HIV/AIDS; that work to improve chronic health prevention and treatment; that save and create jobs in the public health workforce. This is not just about numbers, eliminating this funding will put the American people in harm's way by allowing the continued hemorrhaging of state and local public health workers," added Becker.

Because of these spending reductions, governmental laboratories are closing entire divisions within their respective institutions and have reduced the scope of other divisions, delayed and deferred the purchase and maintenance of equipment, and undergone monthly furlough days.

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Understandably, these budget actions are also causing reductions in services for West Nile virus, food safety testing, the number of samples tested for food safety, as well as increasing the time required to produce laboratory results.

*The Association of Public Health Laboratories is a national non-profit located in Silver Spring, MD, that is dedicated to working with members to strengthen governmental laboratories with a public health mandate. By promoting effective programs and public policy, APHL strives to provide public health laboratories with the resources and infrastructure needed to protect the health of US residents and to prevent and control disease globally.*

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