



City of Cleveland

Frank G. Jackson, Mayor

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Dear Dr. Acton,

We thank the Ohio Department of Health (ODH) for their timely response and for providing clarification on their recent decision to discontinue funding in year two of a three-year HIV/STI prevention grant.

For 25 years the Cleveland Department of Public Health (CDPH) has worked in the community with ODH and partner agencies to provide HIV and STI prevention services in Cleveland and Cuyahoga County. We take very seriously the partnership that has existed over this time and the clients we have served. We have worked with ODH; have strong ties with partner agencies; and have built trust within the community.

As you know, in 2019, the work expanded: the region grew from one to six counties and the focus shifted to priority-based testing for HIV. We have welcomed the technical assistance and oversight ODH has provided to ensure that we reach compliance. While we recognize that there are shortcomings, we also recognize achievements over the past year. CDPH has demonstrated improvement in disease intervention performance measures in 2019 as well as moving closer towards the 1.0% positivity rate for HIV tests, and reaching out to targeted populations.

CDPH is committed to doing our part in ending the HIV epidemic. We will continue to work with the community and provide testing, education and health promotion around infectious diseases. The impact of our collective work has resulted in a decrease in the number of new HIV infections since 2016.

CDPH and the City of Cleveland want to be able to continue to deliver these crucial services within our community and Region 3. We welcome partnership with ODH, their enforcement of guidelines and their oversight of these activities. We would like ODH to re-consider our request to be able to administer this grant.

Natoya Walker Minor
Chief of Public Affairs

Merle Gordon
Director of Public Health