



AMERICAN PUBLIC HEALTH ASSOCIATION

*For science. For action. For health.*

Testimony of the American Public Health Association submitted for the record  
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Senate Subcommittee on Labor, Health and Human Services, and Education, and Related  
Agencies  
Concerning the fiscal year 2017 budgets for the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and  
the Health Resources and Services Administration  
April 14, 2016

APHA is a diverse community of public health professionals who champion the health of all people and communities. We are pleased to submit our request to fund the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention at \$7.8 billion and the Health Resources and Services Administration at \$7.48 billion in FY 2017.

**Centers for Disease Control and Prevention**

We believe Congress should support CDC as an agency and urge a funding level of \$7.8 billion in FY 2017. We are disappointed President Obama's budget request would cut CDC's program level by \$194 million below FY 2016. We acknowledge that the president's budget provides increased funding for important programs and initiatives such as combating antibiotic resistance, preventing prescription drug overdose and research into the causes and prevention of gun violence. In addition, we are pleased his budget would fully allocate the Prevention and Public Health Fund for public health activities. Unfortunately, the president's budget cuts or eliminates other important programs including the REACH program, the Preventive Health and Health Services Block Grant, cancer prevention and control, immunizations and environmental health tracking and we urge you to maintain the funding for these important programs.

CDC provides the foundation for our state and local public health departments, supporting a trained workforce, laboratory capacity and public health education communications systems. It is notable that more than 70 percent of CDC's budget supports public health and prevention activities by state and local health organizations and agencies, national public health partners and academic institutions.

CDC serves as the lead agency for bioterrorism and other public health emergency preparedness and response programs and must receive sustained support for its preparedness programs. Given the challenges of terrorism and disaster preparedness we urge you to provide adequate funding for the Public Health Emergency Preparedness grants.

CDC serves as the command center for the nation's public health defense system against emerging and reemerging infectious diseases. From aiding in the surveillance, detection and prevention of the Zika virus to playing a lead role in the control of Ebola in West Africa and detecting and responding to cases in the U.S., to monitoring and investigating last year's multi-state measles outbreak to pandemic flu preparedness, CDC is the nation's – and the world's –

expert resource and response center, coordinating communications and action and serving as the laboratory reference center for identifying, testing and characterizing potential agents of biological, chemical and radiological terrorism, emerging infectious diseases and other public health emergencies. States, communities and the international community rely on CDC for accurate information and direction in a crisis or outbreak.

Programs under the National Center for Chronic Disease Prevention and Health Promotion address heart disease, stroke, cancer, diabetes and arthritis that are the leading causes of death and disability in the U.S. These diseases, many of which are preventable, are also among the most costly to our health system. The center provides funding for state programs to prevent disease, conduct surveillance to collect data on disease prevalence, monitor intervention efforts and translate scientific findings into public health practice in our communities.

The National Center for Environmental Health protects public health by helping to control asthma, protect from threats associated with natural disasters and climate change, reduce, monitor and track exposure to lead and other hazards and ensure access to safe and clean water. We urge you to support the president's request for the Climate and Health and Safe Water programs, increase funding for Childhood Lead Poisoning Prevention, Environmental Health Laboratory and Asthma programs, restore proposed cuts to the National Environmental and Public Health Tracking Network and restore funding for the Built Environment and Health program which was eliminated in 2016.

Prescription drug overdose is an ongoing public health problem in the U.S. killing more than 145,000 over the past decade. We urge you to support the president's request for increased funding to prevent and reduce prescription drug and heroin overdose deaths.

The development of antimicrobial resistance is occurring at an alarming rate and far outpacing the struggling research and development of new antibiotics. We urge you to support the president's request for the CDC Antibiotic Resistance Initiative that will expand FY 2016 healthcare-associated infections and AR prevention efforts from 25 states to up to 50 states, six large cities and Puerto Rico.

We strongly support the president's request to provide \$10 million in unrestricted funding to CDC to conduct research into the causes and prevention of gun violence.

### **Health Resources and Services Administration**

HRSA operates programs in every state and U.S. territory and has a strong history in improving the health of Americans through the delivery of quality health services and supporting a well-prepared workforce, serving people who are medically underserved or face barriers to needed care. While Congress has restored a portion of HRSA's discretionary budget authority over the past three years, funding for HRSA remains far too low – at 18 percent under the FY 2010 level – significantly limiting the agency's ability to meaningfully respond to growing or emerging health demands such as the Zika virus and the opioid epidemic, while still addressing persistent health needs. The nation faces a shortage of health professionals, and a growing and aging population which will demand more health care. HRSA grantees are well positioned to address these issues, but additional funding is required to effectively do so.

HRSA has contributed to the decrease in infant mortality rate, a widely used indicator of the nation's health, which is now at a historic low of 5.8 deaths per 1,000 live births. People receiving care through the Ryan White HIV/AIDS Program achieve significantly higher viral suppression in comparison to the national average, which is central to preventing new HIV infections. The Title X Family Planning Program has helped prevent over 941,000 unintended pregnancies in 2014 and 1,176 cases of sexually transmitted disease-related infertility.

A strong investment from Congress is needed to build on these health improvements and pave the way for new achievements by supporting critical HRSA programs, including:

- Primary Care programs support more than 9,000 health center sites in every state and U.S. territory, improving access to care for more than 22.9 million patients in geographically isolated and economically distressed communities. Close to half of these health centers serve rural populations. Health centers deliver comprehensive, cost-effective care and have demonstrated their ability to reduce the use of costlier providers of care.
- Health Workforce supports the education, training, scholarship and loan repayment of a broad range of health professionals. These are the only federal programs focused on filling the gaps in the supply of health professionals, and improving the distribution and diversity of the workforce. The programs are responsive to the changing delivery systems, models of care and health care needs, and encourage collaboration between disciplines to provide effective and efficient coordinated care.
- Maternal and Child Health including Title V Maternal and Child Health Block Grant, Healthy Start and others support initiatives designed to promote optimal health, reduce disparities, combat infant mortality, prevent chronic conditions and improve access to quality health care for more than 34.3 million children, including children with special health care needs such as autism and developmental disabilities.
- HIV/AIDS programs provide assistance to states and communities most severely affected by HIV/AIDS. The programs deliver comprehensive care, prescription drug assistance and support services for 512,000 people living with HIV/AIDS, nearly half of the total population living with the disease in the U.S. Additionally, the programs provide education and training for health professionals treating people with HIV/AIDS and work toward addressing the disproportionate impact of HIV/AIDS on racial and ethnic minorities.
- Family Planning Title X services ensure access to a broad range of reproductive, sexual and related preventive health care for more than 4.1 million low-income women, men and adolescents. This program promotes healthy families and helps improve maternal and child health outcomes and reduce unintended pregnancies, infertility and related morbidity.
- Rural Health improves access to care for people living in rural areas that experience a persistent shortage of health care services. These programs are designed to support community-based disease prevention and health promotion projects, help rural hospitals

and clinics implement new technologies and strategies and build health system capacity in rural and frontier areas.

### **Conclusion**

In closing, we emphasize that the public health system requires stronger financial investments at every stage. This funding makes up less than one percent of federal spending. Cuts to public health and prevention programs will not balance our budget and will only lead to increased costs to our health care system. Successes in biomedical research must be translated into tangible prevention opportunities, screening programs, lifestyle and behavior changes and other population-based interventions that are effective and available for everyone so that we can meet the mounting health challenges facing our nation.