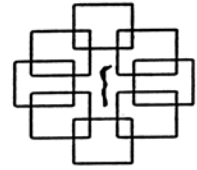


COALITION FOR HEALTH FUNDING



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PRESIDENT CUTS \$1 BILLION IN PUBLIC HEALTH FUNDING

The Coalition for Health Funding is extremely concerned that the President's FY 2006 budget request proposes to cut funding for public health agencies and programs by over \$1 billion below FY 2005 levels. When inflation is factored in, the cuts are as deep as 4.5 percent overall. Within this, certain public health agencies are cut by as much as 12 percent and dozens of programs are zeroed out including the Preventive Health and Health Services Block Grant at the Centers for Disease Prevention and Control.

At a time when our nation is experiencing serious shortages in our public health workforce, and many other areas of our healthcare workforce, and face sharp declines in the coming decade across all health professions, the Bush Administration proposes to eliminate most federal programs to ensure these professionals are trained and available in medically underserved areas. The President has proposed a significant, 17 percent, increase for Community Health Centers and in his recent State of the Union speech expressed his inspired vision of a health center in every community that needs one. But it is unclear who will staff those centers without a matching vision for our nation's healthcare workforce.

At a time when our nation is experiencing an epidemic in obesity with serious health consequences in increased diabetes, heart disease, cancer, arthritis, and other costly chronic diseases, the Bush Administration's budget eliminates, cuts or freezes programs designed to address these growing public health problems. The budget also cuts mental health and substance abuse prevention services, which are chronically underfunded services for highly vulnerable populations.

At a time when our nation has experienced a confusing shortage of influenza vaccine, faces a critical threat from avian flu that could kill millions, is unable to keep up with recommended preventable vaccines for children, faces growing resistance to antibiotics that no longer are effective against

commonly occurring microbes, and continues to experience 40,000 new HIV infections each year, the Bush Administration cuts or freezes funding for most domestic activities that address infectious diseases. A proposal to increase pandemic flu preparation is welcome, but cuts to state and local governmental public health programs undermine the effectiveness of that important initiative.

At a time when our nation needs to prepare for terrorist attacks involving biological, chemical, radiological, or explosive agents, the Bush Administration proposes to cut funding designed to strengthen our health and public health systems where it really counts – in our states, cities and communities.

At a time when our nation is poised to reap the promise offered by a major investment in basic research through the National Institutes of Health, a funding increase of less than 1 percent will delay important initiatives leading to earlier, more targeted diagnoses; more targeted, effective treatment options; and more comprehensive, cost-effective prevention strategies.

In a letter delivered to President Bush and the entire Congress on February 1st, over 400 health organizations urged that, at a minimum, federal public health agencies and programs need an increase of \$3.5 billion to begin to address these critical challenges facing our nation. Comparing the public health community's recommendation with the President's budget for public health, Coalition for Health Funding President, David B. Moore states, "The Bush Administration's FY 2006 budget falls far short of this goal and in doing so misses the opportunity to protect and improve the health of millions of Americans."

The Coalition for Health Funding recognizes that the President's budget presentation is only the first step in the FY 2006 budget cycle. The Coalition will work with the Administration and with Congress to increase funding in the areas of the Public Health Service that are not well supported in this first step in the process.

The Coalition for Health Funding is a nonprofit alliance of 50 national voluntary and professional associations comprising approximately 40 million health care professionals, lay volunteers, patients and families. The Coalition works in a nonpartisan fashion to ensure that discretionary health spending remains highly visible as Congress and the Administration set federal budget priorities. Founded in 1970, the Coalition is the oldest, most broadly based health coalition focused on the budget and appropriations process for discretionary programs.

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