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# THE 317 COALITION

April 5, 2013

The Honorable Kathleen Sebelius  
Secretary, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services  
Hubert H. Humphrey Building  
200 Independence Avenue, SW – Room 120F  
Washington, DC 20201

Dear Secretary Sebelius:

On behalf of the approximately 150 members of the 317 Coalition, I am writing to thank you for your continued support of the Prevention and Public Health Fund and urge you to allocate the \$1 billion that is available in Fiscal Year 2013 for prevention and public health programs to improve health and reduce health care costs as intended by the Affordable Care Act.

The Section 317 program aims to improve access to immunization services by funding the purchase and delivery of vaccines to vulnerable populations, including underinsured children and adolescents, uninsured and underinsured adults, and special populations at high risk of for vaccine-preventable diseases. As the health insurance reforms of the Affordable Care Act are fully implemented, the current priority populations served by Section 317 – underinsured children and adolescents – should have greater access to immunization services, providing an opportunity to use Section 317 resources to reach remaining underserved and uninsured populations. Unfortunately, during the past decade, federal funding has not kept pace with the cost to implement the new recommended vaccines and expanded uses of existing vaccines for children and adolescents, and has never adequately funded vaccines for adults.

A significant portion of the Prevention and Public Health Fund supports the core 317 Program. This funding helps to ensure that the 317 Program is able to provide the essential infrastructure to deliver the Vaccines for Children program and respond to disease outbreaks. A strong public health infrastructure will continue to be critical to ensure high vaccination coverage levels and low incidence of vaccine-preventable diseases, as well as maintaining adequate public health preparedness for response to a vaccine-preventable national emergency. Outbreaks of diseases such as whooping cough, meningitis and influenza continue to plague our nation, requiring ongoing public health intervention. We know that vaccines are the most cost effective medical intervention. For each birth cohort vaccinated against 13 diseases in accordance with the routine childhood immunization schedule, society saves \$13.6 billion in direct medical costs; 42,000 lives are saved; and 20 million cases of disease are prevented.

As you know, the FY 2013 continuing resolution passed by the Congress does not provide an allocation of the fund. As your Administration works to determine the allocation, we urge you to follow the allocations specified by the Senate Appropriations Committee in its FY 2013 Labor, Health and Human Services, Education, and Related Agencies Subcommittee Report. The Senate allocation follows the intent of the Affordable Care Act to use the fund to reduce health care costs through prevention.

Thank you for your attention to this issue.

Sincerely,

Amy Souders  
Executive Director

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