

# United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

April 26, 2013

The Honorable Tom Harkin  
Chairman  
Subcommittee on Labor, Health and  
Human Services, and Education  
Committee on Appropriations  
United States Senate  
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Jerry Moran  
Ranking Member  
Subcommittee on Labor, Health and  
Human Services, and Education  
Committee on Appropriations  
United States Senate  
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Chairman Harkin and Ranking Member Moran:

As you prepare the fiscal year (FY) 2014 Labor, Health and Human Services, and Education Appropriations bill, we urge you to provide \$642 million for the national immunization program authorized under Section 317 of the Public Health Service Act at the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC).

Vaccines are one of the greatest success stories in public health and are among the most cost-effective ways to prevent disease and reduce health care costs. Due to research breakthroughs in the past two decades, for example, we can now protect our children and adolescents from 16 diseases, while in 1987 we only had vaccines for eight diseases. For each birth cohort vaccinated 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. Each dollar invested saves \$10.20 to society.

In 2012, the CDC submitted a report to Congress concluding that the Section 317 program requires additional funding to carry out its essential public health mission of protecting Americans from preventable diseases. Indeed, more than 41,000 cases of pertussis were reported to the CDC in 2012, with 18 pertussis-related deaths. The majority of these deaths occurred among infants younger than three months of age, those too young to be fully protected by the vaccines. This serves as a critical reminder that the rates of coverage must be maintained to help protect vulnerable populations and keep disease rates low in all populations.

Providing \$642 million of funding for the Section 317 program in FY 2014 would ensure access to cost-effective prevention measures to help keep Americans healthier. We greatly appreciate your consideration of this request.

Sincerely,



Jack Reed



Patrick Leahy

Kirsten E. Gillibrand

Carl Levin

M. Wy

Rebecca Stenow

Jim Johnson

Al Franken

Frank R. Lautenberg

Chuck Sch

Shirley

Dir. Durkin

Shirley Brown

Brian Schatz

Richard Blumenthal