

April 21, 2009

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 Thad Cochran  
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 Specter:

As you develop the Fiscal Year 2010 Labor, HHS, and Education Appropriations bill, we respectfully request \$802.5 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). This year, CDC submitted a report to Congress estimating that \$1.6 billion is needed to provide recommended vaccines to eligible populations.

The Section 317 immunization program provides essential funding to state and local health departments for vaccinating children, adolescents, and adults. The majority of the 317 program funds are used by states to conduct routine childhood programs. It ensures that children who are not eligible for the Vaccines for Children (VFC) program and who cannot otherwise afford immunization can be vaccinated. For every dollar invested to provide the seven recommended pediatric vaccines, society saves \$16.50 in direct and indirect costs. This results in billions of dollars in savings from the Section 317 program alone.

A smaller portion of the funding is used for adolescent and adult immunization programs. As a result, adolescent and adult vaccination rates remain considerably lower and racial and ethnic disparities persist. The CDC report clearly illustrates that the Section 317 program does not receive sufficient funding to carry out its essential public health mission. We need our nation's population to be well-vaccinated so that it is less vulnerable to the risks of preventable diseases. Our request would ensure access to cost-effective prevention measures.

Thank you for your past leadership and support of efforts to extend access to life-saving vaccines to children, adolescents, and vulnerable adults.

Sincerely,

---

Jack Reed  
United States Senator

---

Pat Roberts  
United States Senator