

THE 317 COALITION

May 5, 2010

The Honorable David Obey
Chairman, Subcommittee on Labor,
Health & Human Services, and Education
Committee on Appropriations
U.S. House of Representatives
2358-B Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Todd Tiahrt
Ranking Member, Subcommittee on Labor,
Health & Human Services, and Education
Committee on Appropriations
U.S. House of Representatives
1016 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Chairman Obey and Ranking Member Tiahrt:

As organizations committed to protecting the health of children and adults, we recommend increasing federal discretionary funding for the CDC national immunization program, commonly known as the “section 317 program”, which references the program authorization under the Public Health Service Act. We urge you to provide \$800 million in the fiscal year 2011 Labor, HHS Appropriations Bill for this critical program and the related CDC internal operational support.

As you work with the Administration to develop priorities for funding under the Prevention and Public Health Fund that was appropriated under the recently enacted Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act, we urge you to consider the needs of this program activity which is specifically referenced in statute (section 4002(c)) as an authorized use of funds.

The 317 program provides vaccines for children from working families who do not qualify for the federal entitlement program, Vaccines for Children (VFC), as well as for adolescents and adults who do not otherwise have access to vaccines. Section 317 funds are awarded to state and local health departments to purchase and administer vaccines, conduct surveillance, communicate with the public and providers, and provide education.

The FY 2010 appropriations bill provided \$496.8 million for the Section 317 program. In addition, Congress provided supplemental funding of \$300 million within the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA) to be spent in 2009 and 2010 primarily for vaccine purchase and state and local health department infrastructure needs. The ARRA funding resulted in an expansion of vaccination services and increased access to vaccines for children, adolescents, and adults. Additionally, a March 2010 CDC report to Congress estimated that \$1.7 billion in Section 317 funding will be needed to fully protect all of the children eligible under this program for vaccines, and to enhance the adolescent and adult programs, making the need for sustained increases critical.

Over 46,000 people in the U.S. die annually of vaccine-preventable diseases and hundreds of thousands more are hospitalized. Influenza accounts for approximately 36,000 of these deaths. The top 3 causes of vaccine preventable deaths in adults are influenza, pneumonia and hepatitis B.

Vaccines have been hailed as one of the most cost-effective public health measures, saving 35,000 lives and preventing 14 million cases of disease. Vaccines have saved the lives of millions of people worldwide, yet they continue to be undervalued and under-funded year after year. The 317 Program ensures that children who cannot otherwise afford immunization can be vaccinated, and provides some access to vaccinations for uninsured and underinsured adolescents and adults. It is also our public health system’s primary source of funding for building a solid immunization infrastructure, which is needed for today’s vaccines and will be relied upon in the event of an influenza pandemic or other bioterrorist event.

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Please join us in ensuring that all individuals have access to life-saving vaccines.

National Organizations

American Immunization Registry Association
American Nurses Association
Association for Professionals in Infection Control and Epidemiology
Autism Science Foundation
Every Child by Two
Hepatitis B Foundation
Immunization Action Coalition
National Alliance of State & Territorial AIDS Directors
National Association of Pediatric Nurse Practitioners
Parents of Kids with Infectious Diseases (PKIDS)
Partnership for Prevention

State and Local Organizations

Arizona Partnership for Immunization (Phoenix, AZ)
California Immunization Coalition (Sacramento, CA)
Central Michigan District Health Department (Mt. Pleasant, MI)
Childhood Immunization Coalition (Providence, RI)
City of Laredo Health Department (Laredo, TX)
Greater Salt Lake Immunization Coalition (Salt Lake City, UT)
IHA of Ann Arbor (Ann Arbor, MI)
Illinois Maternal & Child Health Coalition (Chicago, IL)
Immunization Coalition of Tompkins County (Ithaca, NY)
Immunization Coalition of Washington, DC
Immunization Task Force – Metro Omaha (Omaha, NE)
Oregon Adult Immunization Coalition (Portland, OR)
The Immunization Partnership (Cypress, TX)
Tulsa Area Immunization Coalition (Tulsa, OK)
Washington Chapter, American Academy of Pediatrics (Mercer Island, WA)
Wisconsin Chapter, American Academy of Pediatrics (Kimberly, WI)
WithinReach (Seattle, WA)

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