

COALITION *for* HEALTH FUNDING

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House Spending Bill Shortchanges America's Health

Bipartisan Budget Deal to Raise the Caps Needed to Support Full Continuum of Public Health, Research

Today, the House Appropriations Subcommittee on Labor, Health and Human Services, Education and Related Agencies approved its fiscal year 2018 spending bill along party lines. This legislation cuts overall funding for the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) and includes damaging policy riders. At the same time, the House and Senate are considering the termination of future funding from the Prevention and Public Health Fund as part of efforts to repeal the Affordable Care Act. The loss of the Prevention and Public Health Fund would compound the bill's spending cuts, cutting 12 percent of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's (CDC) budget, and spilling over into other health agencies and programs—medical research, substance use treatment, workforce development—as lawmakers seek ways to fill the void left by repeal. Putting public health programs in this precarious position ultimately threatens our nation's health security.

On its face this bill cuts \$542 million from HHS, but the cuts are much deeper. Specifically, putting welcome increases at the National Institutes of Health (NIH) and the Administration on Community Living aside, the cut to HHS is closer to \$2 billion across CDC, the Health Resources and Services Administration, Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration, Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality, and other major HHS programs and initiatives. While biomedical research funding is a critical function of the federal government, cures and treatments developed at NIH will fall short of their promise of improved health without a robust health workforce to treat patients, evidence about how to optimally deliver cures to patients, and programs that provide access to clinical discoveries and prevention initiatives. Indeed, the fiscal year 2018 spending bill would undermine programs that help patients get the most of new discoveries, provide necessary support while they await new cures, and prevent disease and disability.

"This year alone, through repeal of the Prevention and Public Health Fund and the introduction of the Labor-HHS appropriations bill, the House has proposed pulling more than \$2.5 billion out of core public health services and infrastructure," said Emily J. Holubowich, Executive Director of the Coalition for Health Funding. "After seven years of cuts in a no-growth environment, cuts of this magnitude will leave us vulnerable to the next health threat, whatever it may be."

Together, program cuts and politically motivated policy riders make this legislation a bad deal for America's health. The Coalition for Health Funding urges Congress and the President to work together in a bipartisan fashion to replace the scheduled sequestration cuts and raise the Budget Control Act's austere spending caps. A new bipartisan budget deal would allow the House Appropriations Committee to craft a spending bill that recognizes the unique and important role that all of the Public Health Service agencies, programs, and activities play in keeping America healthy.

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Founded in 1970, the Coalition for Health Funding's diverse members organizations—representing more than 100 million patients and consumers, health providers, professionals, and researchers—speak with one voice before Congress and the administration in support of federally funded health programs with the shared goal of improved health and well-being for all.

<http://www.publichealthfunding.org>