

# COALITION *for* HEALTH FUNDING

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## **PRESIDENT'S FY 2015 BUDGET BEGINS TO REBUILD HEALTH PROGRAMS**

*Provides Some Room for Growth, But Not Enough*

The Coalition for Health Funding realizes the fiscal constraints policymakers face in this era of austerity. The President's fiscal year (FY) 2015 budget request attempts to restore some of the harmful public health and research cuts of recent years and make new investments in the Indian Health Service, public health security, food and drug safety, mental health services, health professions training, and medical research.

Nonetheless, we remain concerned that funding for public health and health research remains too low. Despite the President's targeted increases, FY 2015 funding for the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) is cut from FY 2014 levels. Indeed, the proposed funding for many discretionary health programs remains below FY 2010, even without adjusting for inflation. The fiscal pressures imposed by austerity afford little opportunity for growth in the President's budget, necessitating flat funding, deep cuts, and in some cases, elimination. With the national deficit now at the lowest level since 2008, the Coalition for Health Funding urges policymakers to revisit enacted austerity measures and do more to address our nation's health deficit.

Every day, in important ways most Americans don't realize, the federal government supports public health programs that enhance their lives. The agencies and programs of HHS prevent and cure disease and disability; promote well-being; educate the next generation of health professionals and scientists; assure food, drug and environmental safety; provide our nation's most vulnerable populations access to care; and protect and respond in times of crisis.

These programs have already done their part to reduce the deficit. Public health and health research represent approximately 1.5 percent of all federal spending. They are not the root cause of our fiscal crisis, and further cuts will not bring the budget into balance. On the contrary, with greater investment, public health and health research are an integral part of the solution. Evidence abounds—from the Department of Defense to the U.S. Chamber of Commerce—that healthy Americans are stronger on the battlefield, have higher academic achievement, and are more productive on the job. Healthy Americans drive our economic engine, and ultimately cost our nation less in health care spending.

"In these tough economic times, cuts in health funding do more harm than good," said Emily Holubowich, Executive Director of the Coalition for Health Funding. "Investing in programs that keep people healthy is the best way to reduce health care spending and eliminate our debt."

The Coalition for Health Funding is the nation's oldest and largest nonprofit alliance working to preserve public health investments in the interest of all Americans. Our 90 member organizations together represent more than 100 million patients, health care providers, public health professionals, and scientists.

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<http://www.publichealthfunding.org>