

# COALITION *for* HEALTH FUNDING

Emily J. Holubowich, MPP, Executive Director

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Contact: Emily J. Holubowich  
Voice: 202.484.1100  
E-mail: [eholubowich@dc-crd.com](mailto:eholubowich@dc-crd.com)

## **“Skinny Budget” Proposes Increases to Defense at the Expense of Americans’ Health**

**Washington, D.C., March 7, 2017** – Today, the President released his “Skinny Budget,” outlining a plan to slash funding for labor, health, human services, and education programs by nearly \$25 billion, including a cut to the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) of 18 percent, as part of an offset package for a major increase in defense spending. The Coalition for Health Funding strongly opposes the budget put forth by the President, given the detrimental effect that such cuts would have on Americans’ health.

For years, the Coalition and our almost 100 member organizations have warned of the implications of continued austerity and budgets that prioritize security abroad over security at home on the government’s ability to adequately support public health. This budget gives a glimpse into what deep cuts to the top line budget mean for these programs.

While the “Skinny Budget” does not detail every cut to health programs, the President’s defense offset does require merging the Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality into the National Institutes of Health at the same time as the President proposes a nearly 20 percent cut to the agency’s budget. Not only would this jeopardize the research that leads to new cures but also the research needed to effectively and efficiently deploy those cures. Further, the President’s budget calls for a \$403 million cut to training programs for health professionals, which help ensure that we have a workforce that meets the nation’s healthcare needs. Still, the remaining half of the cuts to the Department of Health and Human Services listed in the proposal remain undefined but will require significant cuts to other critical public health programs.

In 2015, the Coalition outlined the effects of recent federal budget cuts to health programs in our report [\*Faces of Austerity: How Budget Cuts Hurt America’s Health\*](#). The report highlights Americans from across the country who have been personally affected by cuts at the federal level. These Americans are scientists on the edge of discovery whose science was put on hold and public health first responders who have seen their disaster response capacity dwindle. They are seniors who no longer receive a warm meal due to cuts to nutrition programs. Under this proposal, more stories like these are not a possibility, they are a certainty. Emily Holubowich, executive director of the Coalition, said:

*“This budget demonstrates the reality of increasing the defense budget at the expense of nondefense programs. The Department of Health and Human Services and the Department of Defense both have critical roles to play in protecting Americans’ security. We simply cannot afford to increase funding for the military at the continued expense of programs that keep Americans healthy.”*

Unfortunately, this is not the President’s only request for increases for defense at the expense of nondefense. The President has requested similar offsets in the remainder of fiscal year 2017 for supplemental defense funding to the tune of \$18 billion. If implemented this late in the year, the effects of that cut on public health programs would not only be significant but also immediate, allowing federal agencies no time to plan and taking away services the government provides for everyone’s benefit.

<http://www.publichealthfunding.org>

In the face of these proposals, the Coalition for Health Funding will continue to work with Congress and the President to adequately fund the Department of Health and Human Service and its agencies to support all facets of the public health continuum.

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*The Coalition for Health Funding works to preserve and strengthen federal investments across the public health continuum. Founded in 1970, the Coalition'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.*