

COALITION *for* HEALTH FUNDING

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

April 2, 2019

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Washington, D.C. – Coalition for Health Funding Executive Director Emily Holubowich issued the following statement in response to the House Budget Committee Chairman John Yarmuth's proposed legislation to raise the austere discretionary spending caps:

House Budget Committee Chairman John Yarmuth's proposal to raise the discretionary spending caps is an important and responsible first step in preventing devastating cuts to public health, health research, and other domestic programs at the end of the current fiscal year. Without action by Congress and the White House, under existing law these programs will be cut by \$55 billion, or about 11 percent across the board – an amount greater than the original wave of sequestration cuts in fiscal 2013.

We know how a cut of this magnitude would put all Americans' health security at risk. The Coalition for Health Funding has spent the last decade documenting the effects of austerity on health and other domestic programs. Our members have seen seniors going hungry, women denied access to care, newborns not screened for genetic disorders and disabilities, young scientists driven to new career paths, people dying on wait lists for addiction treatment. We've seen firsthand the crumbling public health infrastructure—antiquated, paper-based information sharing that hinders emergency response; workforce recruiting, retention, and education challenges; deferred maintenance on buildings and equipment—that have an impact on our ability to protect Americans health. Indeed, signs of the lack of sustained investment are prevalent in the headlines: an addiction epidemic, measles outbreaks, rising STD and chronic disease rates, and ultimately, decreased life expectancy.

Public health knows how to prevent and respond to these challenges. Previous bipartisan budget agreements have paved the way for modest investments, but they are far short of what is needed to truly improve and protect the health of the population. We must build on the success of the previous bipartisan budget agreements to ensure public health and other programs have the resources necessary to carry out their mission. Chairman Yarmuth's proposal would prevent more harmful and unnecessary cuts, and allow for an \$88 billion increase in domestic programs in fiscal 2020. Importantly, it also initiates a dialogue early in the process—there is too much at stake to save these negotiations for the 11th hour.

The Coalition for Health Funding hopes all lawmakers will seriously consider Chairman Yarmuth's proposal, and work together with the White House to enact another bipartisan budget deal to raise the spending caps as soon as possible.

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The Coalition for Health Funding is a nonprofit alliance working to preserve public health investments in the interest of all Americans. Our 95 member organizations together represent more than 100 million patients and consumers, health providers, professionals, and researchers.

<http://www.publichealthfunding.org>