

# United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

April 4, 2014

The Honorable Tom Harkin  
Chairman  
Subcommittee on Labor, Health and  
Human Services, and Education  
Committee on Appropriations  
United States Senate  
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Jerry Moran  
Ranking Member  
Subcommittee on Labor, Health and  
Human Services, and Education  
Committee on Appropriations  
United States Senate  
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Chairman Harkin and Ranking Member Moran:

As you prepare the fiscal year (FY) 2015 Labor, Health and Human Services, and Education Appropriations bill, we urge you to provide \$650 million for the national immunization program authorized under Section 317 of the Public Health Service Act at the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC).

Vaccines are one of the greatest success stories in public health and are among the most cost-effective ways to prevent disease and reduce health care costs. The Section 317 program plays a crucial role in protecting communities from disease by serving as the backbone of our nation's public health infrastructure. Specifically, the Section 317 program supports the science that informs the evidence base for our national immunization policy, provides a safety net to uninsured, poor adults for vaccine purchases, monitors the safety of vaccines and the coverage of vulnerable populations, and conducts surveillance and testing to respond to disease outbreaks. The Vaccines for Children program also relies upon this critical infrastructure and operations support funded through the Section 317 program.

In 2014, the CDC submitted a report to Congress concluding that the Section 317 program requires additional funding to carry out its essential public health mission of protecting Americans from preventable diseases. Although CDC determined that measles was eliminated in the US in 2000, cases of measles are still imported into the US and can lead to outbreaks. Indeed, 2013 saw the second largest number of cases of measles in the U.S. since the CDC's determination – including the largest U.S. measles outbreak since 1996. This serves as a critical reminder that national, state and local outbreak response capacity and coverage monitoring must be maintained to help protect vulnerable populations and keep disease rates low in all populations.

Providing \$650 million of funding for the Section 317 program in FY 2015 would ensure access to cost-effective prevention measures to help keep Americans healthier. We greatly appreciate your consideration of this request.

Sincerely,

Jack Reed

Sherrill Brown

Sica Durbin

Whitcomb

Jeanne Shaheen

Mazie Hironaka

Jim Johnson

Roberto Clemente

Patrick Leahy

Richard Blumenthal

Tom Carper

Elizabeth Warren

Ron Wyden

Cheri Casper

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