
THE 317 COALITION

September 5, 2018

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

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

The Honorable Tom Cole
Chairman
Subcommittee on Labor, Health and
Human Services, and Education
Committee on Appropriations
United States House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Rosa DeLauro
Ranking Member
Subcommittee on Labor, Health and
Human Services, and Education
Committee on Appropriations
United States House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Chairmen Blunt and Cole and Ranking Members Murray and DeLauro:

Thank you for your support of our nation's immunization system in the Labor, HHS, and Education Appropriations bills. As you move into conference for the fiscal year 2019 Labor-HHS-Education appropriations bill, we urge you to fund the national immunization program authorized under Section 317 of the Public Health Service Act at the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) at \$620,847,000, the level included in the House bill.

In August of 2016, CDC submitted a report to Congress which shows that the Section 317 program is not adequately funded to carry out its essential public health mission of protecting Americans from preventable diseases. According to CDC, additional funding would help address growing gaps in immunization coverage, strengthen the scientific foundation for vaccine policy decision making, and enhance the program's ability to respond to urgent public health vaccination needs. Increased funding for the Section 317 program in FY 2019 would ensure access to these cost-effective prevention measures and help keep Americans healthy.

Now more than ever, adequate funding for the Section 317 program is essential. As of July 2018, CDC has confirmed 107 individual cases of measles in 21 states and the District of Columbia, an increase from 118 confirmed cases across 15 states in 2017. Similarly, outbreaks of hepatitis A have spread to more than nine US states, with outbreak-associated cases surging from nearly zero in 2015 to almost 1,600 in 2017. From January 2017 to April 2018, CDC has received more than 2,500 reports of hepatitis A infections associated with person-to-person transmission from multiple states. This data represents an alarming trend, and the growing threat of infectious disease outbreaks call for increased support for efforts to prevent and respond to such outbreaks.

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Vaccines are one of the greatest success stories in public health and are among the most cost-effective ways to prevent disease. Indeed, we know that for each dollar invested in the U.S. childhood immunization program, there are over ten dollars of societal savings and three dollars in direct medical savings. Moreover, childhood immunizations over the past twenty-three years have prevented 381 million illnesses, 855,000 early deaths, and \$1.65 trillion in total society costs.

Providing \$620,847,000 million for the Section 317 program in FY 2019 would ensure access to cost-effective prevention measures to help keep Americans healthier. We greatly appreciate your consideration of this vital request as the bill moves to conference.

Sincerely,

Association of Immunization Managers
Every Child By Two
Immunization Action Coalition
March of Dimes
National Association of County and City Health Officials