

Budgets, Battles, and Déjà vu

The House of Representatives recently adopted a Budget Resolution, crafted by Budget Committee Chairman Paul Ryan and similar to last year's House Budget. The vote was along party lines, setting up yet another budget battle with the Democratic Senate in the months ahead. While such partisanship has become commonplace, the dangerous elements included in the House Budget should not be underestimated. **Drastic cuts to Medicaid, the repeal of the Affordable Care Act, and extreme cuts to all other domestic spending (including HCH)** are central to the House Budget and may influence legislative decisions now and in the future. Contact your elected officials and make sure they know how the House Budget would harm your patients, your HCH projects and your communities!

Background

Each year, Congress is to adopt a Budget Resolution establishing the total annual spending level and other fiscal priorities. The total spending amount set in the Budget Resolution is then divided between the 12 Appropriations Subcommittees, who allocate funding to the various federal programs.

The Senate has indicated it will not adopt a Budget Resolution this year but instead will rely on the spending caps in the Budget Control Act (the law that raised the debt ceiling) for its Appropriations work. The House Budget Resolution, on the other hand, reduces FY2013 spending by \$19 billion below the Senate number. This will inevitably result in differences between the Senate and the House Appropriations Bills and on-going, fierce budget battles.

In addition to spending cuts, the House Budget Resolution also calls for changes in *fiscal policy* in the coming years. The changes are numerous, troubling, and unfortunately will sound familiar to *Mobilizer* readers. An abbreviated list includes:

- Turning Medicaid into a block grant, reducing funding by \$800 billion over ten years
- Turning the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (food stamps) into a block grant, reducing funding by \$134 billion over ten years
- Repealing the Affordable Care Act and its insurance expansion for millions of low-income adults
- Increasing defense spending
- Providing trillions in tax cuts to wealthy Americans

These policies would devastate homeless and other social services in the name of deficit reduction, though alternative ways to reduce the debt are available (for more detail on the House Budget Resolution, please visit the Center on Budget Policies and Priorities Ryan Budget [page](#)).

The National HCH Council recently sent a [letter](#) to Members of Congress, emphasizing the contribution of targeted homeless programs in actually *reducing* the overall cost of public programs. Other national homeless advocacy organizations are doing the same. Together, we believe that **now is the time to speak up for compassionate, cost-effective public spending.**

TAKE ACTION

Call the Capitol Switchboard at **1(877) 210-5351** and ask to be connected to your Representative or Senators (**call all three!**). Ask to speak to the staff person in charge

of health or housing programs and use the following talking points:

- Let them know where you work and live.
- State that as a service provider you do not support the reductions in human services funding contained in the House Budget.
- Encourage adequate funding for homelessness and housing programs like HCH and other Community Health Centers, SAMHSA programs, and HUD housing programs.
- Emphasize the programs' cost-savings: reducing hospital and ER visits, reducing criminal justice costs, improving self-sufficiency and stability.
- Reference the letter sent by the Council. If the staffer has not seen it, ask for an e-mail address so you can send the [letter](#) directly to the staff member.
- Customize the letter for your own use with this [file](#).

The coordinated efforts of *Mobilizer* readers, Council staff, and partner organizations will make clear that low-income programs are essential and must not be sacrificed to balance the budget.

Make plans to join us at the 2012 National Health Care for the Homeless Conference, May 16-18, in Kansas City. View full conference details, including information about the 70+ accredited workshops, nationally recognized plenary speakers, professional networking opportunities and registration details, at <http://www.nhchc.org/national-conference-2012/>.

Be sure to also register for the grassroots advocacy Pre-Conference Institute on May 15th.

**Support The National HCH Council's advocacy work!
Donate [here](#)**

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