

Health Needs Grow as Resources Diminish

Deliberations over next year's funding are underway and the advocacy of the HCH community is needed more than ever. The tight spending caps put in place by last summer's Budget Control Act (BCA) have made resources scarce and will require tough choices where prioritizing one program will lead to fewer resources for another. **Call your members of Congress today to make sure health center funding is maintained and issues of health and homelessness are heard loud and clear.**

Background

The total funding allocated for each Appropriations Subcommittee has been determined in both the Senate and the House. The Senate has based its numbers on the spending caps included in the BCA and its Labor-Health and Human Services-Education (LHHS) Subcommittee is approximately level funded compared with last year. The House has set limits (for non-defense programs) lower than what is required by BCA and \$7 billion less than the Senate for its LHHS Subcommittee.

The Health Center program was funded last year at \$2.8 billion, with \$1.6 billion from annual appropriations and \$1.2 billion from the Affordable Care Act (known as Health Reform or the ACA). The program is scheduled to receive \$1.5 billion from the ACA this year but level annual appropriations will be needed to sufficiently expand (for total funding of \$3.1 billion). Expanding HCH and other health center sites is critical to meet the current unmet need and prepare for the insurance expansions included in the ACA.

Timing

The Senate Subcommittee is scheduled to markup the Labor-HHS-Education bill today, Tuesday June 12 at 2:30pm EDT. The bill will then be heard later this week by the full Appropriations Committee. The House is likely to begin consideration of its bill the following week. **Weigh in today or early this week for best timing.**

TAKE ACTION

In times of such budgetary scrutiny, members of Congress in both chambers need to hear that the health center/HCH program is important to their constituents. Use the Capitol Switchboard - **1(877) 210-5351** - to call all three of your members of Congress. Use the talking points below in your call:

- Introduce yourself and your project and ask to speak with the health staffer.
- Ask that your member support a health center funding level of **\$1.6 billion in annual appropriations for a total of \$3.1 billion (including the \$1.5 in the ACA).**
- Ask that the committee instruct HRSA to use the increased funding for health center expansion, not for other purposes.
- Reference this [policy paper](#) from our partners at the National Association of Community Health Centers for facts on cost savings, quality, and access at health centers.
- Describe what you see in your project and the unmet need in your community.
- Reference any HRSA grants you have applied for and are hoping to receive.
- Emphasize the importance of other funding streams to your project and consumers, such as SAMHSA, Ryan White, or other social service programs.

The staffer may or may not have time for a lengthy discussion. If they are busy or you

can only leave a message, make sure to emphasize the total funding requested (\$3.1 billion) and the importance of using increased funds for expansion. **Retaining the expansion intended in the ACA is the only way to grow to meet the needs in our communities and improve the health of the most vulnerable.**

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