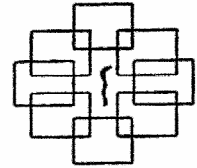


COALITION FOR HEALTH FUNDING



Marcia S. Mabee, MPH, PhD, Executive Director

December 2, 2008

The Honorable Nancy Pelosi
Speaker
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Harry Reid
Majority Leader
U.S. Senate
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Steny Hoyer
Majority Leader
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Mitch McConnell
Minority Leader
U.S. Senate
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable John Boehner
Minority Leader
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Madam and Sirs:

The Coalition for Health Funding strongly urges you to consider the profound stimulus benefits providing funding increases for the health agencies and programs within the FY 2009 Labor, Health and Human Services and Education Appropriations bill would have on the economy. In a September 8, 2008 letter, addressed and sent to each of you, over **300** health groups urged inclusion of the highest possible funding level for health programs, provided in either the House or Senate Labor, Health and Human Services and Education Appropriations bill, in the final, conferenced bill. A copy of that letter, addressed to Speaker Pelosi, is attached.

The Labor, Health and Human Services and Education Appropriations bill is the largest federal domestic appropriations bill. The health programs within it are critical to maintaining the health and well-being

of America's people which, in turn, are necessary for economic recovery. These agencies and programs constitute the nation's primary investment in biomedical, behavioral and health services research – a major source of employment; prevention of infectious and chronic diseases, as well as injuries, all of which are extremely costly to treat after the fact; and key aspects of the healthcare safety net, including primary care delivered through Community Health Centers, HIV/AIDS services, maternal and child health services, mental health and addiction services, services for the disabled and many other programs for the medically underserved.

Over the past four years, the seven major federal public health agencies have lost an estimated \$6.8 billion (13.5 percent) in purchasing power alone. This alarming erosion is occurring as demands for healthcare safety net services in a deep recession are growing and challenges are emerging such as increased food-borne illness, rapidly growing numbers of antimicrobial resistant organisms, and an obesity epidemic. All of these factors, plus the added benefit of assuring program-related employment stability and potential, argues for increasing funding for health programs within the final Labor, Health and Human Services and Education Appropriations bill, not continuing the decreases we are experiencing.

The health community appeals to you to reverse the trend in funding erosion for federal public health programs and activities and instead invest in related jobs, health discoveries, disease prevention, health promotion, and safety net services. As you bring to a close the FY 2009 funding cycle, CHF urges you to allocate the highest possible funding levels, either within the parameters of the House and Senate Labor, Health and Human Services and Education Appropriations bills, or beyond, with additional allocation for the federal government's largest domestic funding bill.

Sincerely yours,

Julio C. Abreu
President

Cc:

The Honorable David Obey
The Honorable Jerry Lewis
The Honorable Robert Byrd
The Honorable Thad Cochran
The Honorable Tom Harkin
The Honorable Arlen Specter

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