

The Honorable Richard Shelby
Chairman
US Senate Appropriations Committee
304 Russell Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Patrick Leahy
Vice Chairman
US Senate Appropriations Committee
437 Russell Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Nita Lowey
Chairwoman
US House Appropriations Committee
2365 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Kay Granger
Ranking Member
US House Appropriations Committee
1026 Longworth House Office Building
Washington DC, 20515

Dear Chairman Shelby, Vice Chairman Leahy, Chairwoman Lowey, and Ranking Member Granger –

As you work to finalize the Labor, Health and Human Services funding bill for fiscal year (FY) 2020, we the undersigned organizations urge you to fund the Division of STD Prevention (DSTDP) at the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) at the House passed number of \$167 million, a \$10 million increase from FY 2019. This will be the first increase for STD prevention programs in over fifteen years.

Data released last month by the CDC shows that after five years of dramatic increases, combined cases of syphilis, gonorrhea, and chlamydia reached all-time highs in the U.S. Tragically, congenital (mother-to-child) syphilis increased by 40 percent in one year, leading to a 22 percent increase in newborn deaths related to congenital syphilis. These historic increases have created a public health emergency with devastating long-term health consequences including infertility, cancer, transmission of HIV, and infant and newborn death.

An October 2019 article from the *Washington Post Editorial Board* urged Congress to act and support the \$10 million increase from the House, citing that we have the tools to prevent STD cases, but are missing important and vulnerable populations due to a lack of resources. This article echoed research findings from CDC and others that showed more than half of local STD programs have experienced budget cuts, resulting in clinic closures, reduced screening, and staff loss in recent years.

Failure to adequately fund STD prevention programs will only exacerbate the rise in STDs and put more lives, and in-particular newborn lives, at risk. We thank you for your commitment to public health.

Sincerely,

Advocates for Youth
American Sexual Health Association

American Sexually Transmitted Diseases Association
Association of Maternal & Child Health Programs
Association of State and Territorial Health Officials
GLMA: Health Professionals Advancing LGBTQ Equality
HIV Medicine Association
Human Rights Campaign
NASTAD
National Association of County and City Health Officials
National Coalition of STD Directors
National Family Planning & Reproductive Health Association
NMAC
Planned Parenthood Federation of America
SIECUS: Sex Ed for Social Change
The AIDS Institute
Treatment Action Group (TAG)