

CAMPAIGN FOR PUBLIC HEALTH

900 2nd STREET, NE • Suite 118 • WASHINGTON, DC 20002

PHONE 202.898.9060 • FAX 202.962.0226

May XX, 2008

The Honorable David R. Obey
Chairman
Committee on Appropriations
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

This letter will be sent to House and Senate members of the Appropriations Committees in mid-May. To add your organization to the letter, contact Karl Moeller at the Campaign for Public Health by COB on May 16.

Email Karlm@FundCDC.org

Phone call (202) 898-9060

Dear Chairman Obey:

As the 110th Congress works through the task of appropriating limited federal funds across the many departments and agencies of the executive branch, the organizations listed below are deeply concerned that the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention is currently underfunded relative to its responsibilities to protect our nation from today's public health threats. We respectfully request that you support a significant increase in funding for the CDC's science-based public health programs in fiscal year 2009, with a goal of reaching a core program funding level of \$10 billion by 2015.

We congratulate the leadership of the Appropriations Committee in both the House and Senate for moving the CDC's budget in the right direction last year. The original FY 2008 Labor HHS conference report that was vetoed by President Bush in November 2007 provided the CDC with more than a 6 percent increase over the previous year—the largest one-year increase proposed for the agency in several years. We greatly appreciate your committee's recognition that major investments are needed to bring the CDC back in line with the health needs of the nation.

The CDC's complex budget includes the Vaccines for Children program, a mandatory spending program that has grown significantly in recent years. Important increases to the VFC budget line, coupled with needed investments in bioterrorism preparedness since 2001, have masked the damage done to the CDC's traditional "core" health protection programs. While the CDC's total budget has increased since fiscal year 2002, closer inspection reveals core programs have lost significant buying power over that same time frame. This is particularly evident after adjusting for inflation. The CDC's ability to fully deploy this nation's infectious disease, health promotion, environmental health, injury prevention, occupational safety, global health and public health research efforts are being curtailed at the very time in our history when these issues should be given high priority.

Reforming our nation's health system continues to be the focus of debate on the campaign trail, in Washington and in the press. While a great deal of attention is given to providing care and treatment to those who are sick, many fail to address efforts to *prevent* illness, injury and disease at the outset. By supporting increased funding for the vital public health efforts of the CDC, we will have the tools to combat many alarming health trends. Perhaps the most chilling is the reality that our children's generation may be the first in our history with a shorter life expectancy than their parents. Population-based public health prevention strategies supported by CDC lie at

the core of our nation's response to this alarming reversal in what has been a decades long trend in improving American life expectancy.

Our organizations ask that investments in the CDC's core program areas total \$7.4 billion in FY09. This level of funding, and the goal of \$10 billion for core programs by 2015, would fall *below* the funding levels proposed by the CDC in recent professional judgment budgets. These budget documents were requested from the CDC by Congress and outline the funding levels the agency believes it needs in order to best protect the health of all Americans.

As the attached chart demonstrates, a goal of \$10 billion for the CDC's core programs by 2015 is a compromise. This funding level keeps the CDC from being eaten away by inflation but represents a less aggressive growth line than the CDC proposed in its professional judgment budget.

As you undertake the difficult task of addressing the needs of our nation, we urge you to provide the CDC with a significant increase in funding. The valuable health protection efforts provided by this agency may very well be the best and most underappreciated tools we have to combat both the old and new challenges that threaten the health of the public.

Sincerely,

Campaign for Public Health
[organizations listed below in alpha order]

