

July 31, 2025

The Honorable Tom Cole
Chair
House Appropriations Committee
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Rosa DeLauro
Ranking Member
House Appropriations Committee
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Susan Collins
Chair
Senate Appropriations Committee
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Patty Murray
Vice Chair
Senate Appropriations Committee
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Chairman Cole, Ranking Member DeLauro, Chair Collins, and Vice Chair Murray:

On behalf of the more than 600,000 frontline physicians and medical students our organizations represent, we write to urge you to prioritize health care funding in FY 2026 Labor, Health and Human Services, Education, and Related Agencies (LHHS) appropriations bills. These investments are vital to enhancing public health, research, and the health care workforce that improves our country's health and wellbeing, including maintaining access to life saving immunizations.

The FY 2026 LHHS bill offers Congress an important opportunity to provide the necessary resources for the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) to support research and public health programs across the country. Funding provided through the LHHS bill also supports public health surveillance and direct services for patients that range from cancer and diabetes screenings to maternal health and behavioral health care.

Unfortunately, the FY 2026 budget proposed by HHS weakens efforts to make Americans healthier and diminishes our ability to implement evidence-based public health strategies. The HHS requests for the National Institutes of Health (NIH) and Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) would set funding for both agencies back more than 20 years; the HHS budget would cut the NIH by nearly 40 percent (\$17.95B) and the CDC by almost 49 percent (\$3.9B). Additionally, while rolled into the proposed Administration for a Healthy America, funding for the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) would be cut by 23 percent (\$1.7B).

These cuts will lead to the termination of support for public health programs and patient services across the country. On a local level, it will impact state health departments' ability to track the occurrence of infectious diseases, analyze and improve maternal health outcomes, support tobacco cessation efforts, and implement nutrition and obesity

programs. It will also hinder health care research that would better our understanding of how to prevent disease and improve care delivery.

In addition, we are concerned about the elimination of several Title VII workforce programs in the proposed budget. Programs like the Primary Care Training and Enhancement and Area Health Care Center programs are essential to incentivizing individuals to enter the primary care workforce. The U.S. will need more than 40,000 more primary care physicians by 2036 to prevent long-term workforce shortages. At a time when we have workforce gaps, we should be ensuring all incentives are in place to encourage greater participation in primary care.

Lastly, incidence rates of vaccine-preventable diseases, such as pertussis (whooping cough) and measles, are increasing. In fact, the U.S. currently faces the highest number of measles cases in 33 years. Now is the time to continue investment and strengthen our nation's public health and research initiatives. We urge you to sustain investment in these programs in FY 2026 and protect their critical roles in promoting public health and conducting medical and health services research.

Thank you for considering our request. If you have any questions, please contact David Tully at dtully@aafp.org.

Sincerely,

American Academy of Family Physicians
American Academy of Pediatrics
American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists
American College of Physicians
American Osteopathic Association
American Psychiatric Association