



November 30, 2022

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

The Honorable Kay Granger
Ranking Member
House Appropriations Committee
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Patrick Leahy
Chair
Senate Appropriations Committee
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Richard Shelby
Vice Chair
Senate Appropriations Committee
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Chairwoman DeLauro, Chairman Leahy, Ranking Member Granger and Vice Chairman Shelby:

On behalf of the more than 590,000 physicians and medical students our organizations represent, we write to urge Congress to finalize FY 2023 appropriations legislation and include robust funding for several health care priorities in advance of the 118th Congress. Continued short-term funding fosters uncertainty and makes it more difficult for federal health agencies to comprehensively prepare and respond to the health care needs.

The federal budget provides critical funding for agencies and programs that physicians and their patients rely on to improve access to care, promote research to improve the efficacy and safety of health care services and medical treatments, support essential primary care workforce programs, and fund disease prevention and health promotion efforts. Specifically, our organizations support robust federal funding for the following priorities as Congress works to finalize the FY 2023 federal budget.

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) – In order to prioritize the health and wellbeing of our communities, we urge Congress to provide robust funding for CDC programs and ensure the federal government and our nation’s health care professionals have the resources needed to address COVID-19 while taking necessary steps to prepare for long-term preventative and public health activities.

Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) – As the federal government has taken many actions to improve and increase access to quality and coverage, strong funding for CMS is essential for management activities related to our nation’s public health and medical systems.

Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality (AHRQ) and National Institutes of Health (NIH) - Ensuring our research programming remains strong and stable is essential as our organizations and other health stakeholders work to better understand the long-term impacts of the COVID-

19 pandemic and other diseases. We strongly support funding that prioritizes research programs to address issues such as gun violence and the mental health and substance use disorder crisis that has only been exacerbated by the pandemic.

Health Resources Services Administration (HRSA) – While many of our members have been providing care on the frontlines of the COVID-19 pandemic, the physician workforce has simultaneously experienced many challenges, including physician shortages and high rates of burnout. Funding for HRSA will allow the federal government to respond to challenges associated with workforce shortages and invest in programs that support a well-trained physician workforce.

Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) – Nearly 20% of Americans are affected by a mental health or substance use disorder annually. Additionally, 50% of all lifetime mental illnesses begin by age 14, and 75% by age 24. The COVID-19 pandemic has exacerbated our nation’s mental health crisis, including substance use, across the age continuum amid a growing shortage of mental health providers. Funding for SAMHSA is an essential part of tackling the mental health crisis through a comprehensive approach that includes mental health promotion and prevention, early intervention and treatment, as well as crisis response.

In addition, we encourage Congress to provide supplemental funding to continue to address the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic. While we are preparing for the eventual commercialization of COVID-19 vaccines, it is still crucial the government ensure vaccines and therapeutics are available for the uninsured and others who cannot access them. It is also important to support funding for “next-generation” vaccines and therapeutics that can protect against multiple sub-variants of the COVID-19 virus. Additionally, the United States needs to continue to support the global COVID-19 response.

Long-term and predictable funding for the physician workforce, public health, and medical research programs is essential for our federal agencies to be able to respond to current and future issues impacting access and patient outcomes. We hope that Congress will take the necessary steps this year to pass an omnibus package that ensures these programs get stable and essential funding to create certainty and allow for regular order to take place for the FY 2024 federal budget.

Thank you for your work to support our health care system during this crucial time. 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