



October 28, 2015

Dear Member of Congress:

On behalf of the National Viral Hepatitis Roundtable (NVHR) – a coalition of over 300 public, private, and voluntary organizational members working to end the hepatitis B and hepatitis C epidemics in the United States – we are writing to share our strong support the Bipartisan Budget Act of 2015 (BBA), which we urge you to support. This deal, brokered by all four corners of Congressional leadership and the President, restores critical funding equally to both defense and nondefense spending that keeps Americans healthy, safe, and secure and ensures that we do not risk the full faith and credit of the United States by suspending the debt ceiling through March 2017.

The BBA continues the precedent set by the Bipartisan Budget Act of 2013 by replacing sequestration equally for both defense and nondefense over the next two years. In fact, the bill replaces about ninety percent of sequestration cuts in fiscal year (FY) 2016 and by about sixty percent in FY 2017. This provides Congress with an additional \$55 billion over the next two years to invest in nondefense discretionary programs that are critical to protecting and improving public health, thereby enriching quality of life and ensuring greater economic productivity. By providing equal relief for defense and nondefense, this deal shows Americans that Congress can both provide for the common defense and promote the general welfare of this great nation.

Failure of this deal would mean a continuation of all of the harmful sequestration cuts that hinder necessary investments in responding to communicable, chronic, and potentially life-threatening conditions such as hepatitis B and hepatitis C. Underfunded and flat-funded for several years, the failure of this deal will continue to undermine the ability of the Division of Viral Hepatitis at CDC (among other entities) to be truly impactful. The Labor, Health and Human Services, Education, and Related Agencies appropriations bill – “the people’s bill” – has suffered time and again from budget cuts, and urgently requires additional allocations of funds from any such deal.

NVHR urges Congress to vote yes on the Bipartisan Budget Act of 2015 to replace harmful sequestration cuts with a balanced approach to deficit reduction. This deal paves the path to a bipartisan agreement on appropriations for the remainder of FY 2016, avoids a shutdown and a full year continuing resolution. Moving forward, Congress must also take care to avoid poison pill riders in any appropriations bill that will threaten the implementation of the relief provided in this deal.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Ryan Clary". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Ryan Clary
Executive Director