



October 30, 2015

The Honorable Thad Cochran
Chairman
Committee on Appropriations
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Barbara Mikulski
Ranking Member
Committee on Appropriations
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Harold Rogers
Chairman
Committee on Appropriations
United States House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Nita Lowey
Ranking Member
Committee on Appropriations
United States House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairmen Cochran and Rogers and Ranking Members Mikulski and Lowey:

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 – I am writing to urge you to increase the 302(b) allocation to the Subcommittee on Labor, Health and Human Services, Education, and Related Agencies (LHHS) to the highest possible level for fiscal year (FY) 2016.

The LHHS allocation serves a broad range of constituencies and needs, but all share a common goal of strengthening the nation by improving and supporting Americans' positive health outcomes, educational attainment, and economic productivity and prosperity. In this challenging fiscal environment, the social and economic returns realized through the LHHS allocation are more critical than ever. Despite the profound impact that "the people's bill" has on American lives, these programs and services have been cut by 12 percent (\$21 billion) since FY 2010, adjusted for inflation. In real terms, FY 2015 is at its second lowest level since FY 2001—the only lower year being FY 2013 when sequestration's across-the-board cuts took effect.

Without an increase, many of the nation's crucial health, educational, and labor needs will remain unmet. For the communities NVHR represents, an increase to the LHHS allocation is necessary for the opportunity to increase funds to the Division of Viral Hepatitis (DVH) at the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Currently, DVH is funded at just \$31.4 million to combat communicable, chronic, and potentially-life threatening epidemics already affecting approximately 6 million Americans. This funding level is entirely inadequate to address existing prevalence – representing the most common risk factor for developing liver cancer – or emerging infections, which are intimately tied to and driven by the opioid and heroin epidemics gripping communities nationwide.



Again, we strongly urge you to recognize the value of health, education, child development, social services, and job training and workforce development in improving the lives of American families and increase the LHHS 302(b) allocation to the highest possible level for FY2016. We look forward to continuing to work with your offices on FY2016 appropriations and beyond; please do not hesitate to contact Christine Rodriguez, Senior Policy Manager, at crodriguez@nvhr.org or 703.945.9698 with any questions.

Sincerely,

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

Ryan Clary
Executive Director

cc:

Sen. Mitch McConnell, Majority Leader

Sen. John Cornyn, Majority Whip

Sen. Harry Reid, Democratic Leader

Sen. Richard Durbin, Democratic Whip

Sen. Roy Blunt, Chairman, Appropriations Subcommittee on Labor, Health and Human Services, Education, and Related Agencies

Sen. Patty Murray, Ranking Member, Appropriations Subcommittee on Labor, Health and Human Services, Education, and Related Agencies

Rep. Paul Ryan, Speaker of the House

Rep. Kevin McCarthy, Majority Leader

Rep. Steven Scalise, Majority Whip

Rep. Nancy Pelosi, Democratic Leader

Rep. Steny Hoyer, Democratic Whip

Rep. James Clyburn, Assistant Democratic Leader

Rep. Tom Cole, Chairman, Appropriations Subcommittee on Labor, Health and Human Services, Education, and Related Agencies

Rep. Rosa DeLauro, Ranking Member, Appropriations Subcommittee on Labor, Health and Human Services, Education, and Related Agencies