



Cuts to HHS Could Leave Americans' Health in Critical Condition, TFAH Says; New Poll Shows Americans Believe Disease Prevention is Key to Reducing Healthcare Costs

Media Contact: Laura Segal (202) 223-9870 x 27 or lsegal@tfah.org

Washington, D. C. February 4, 2008 – Trust for America's Health warns that the proposed 7 percent cut to the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) in the president's fiscal year 2009 budget could harm the health of Americans. Under the proposal, the budget for CDC would fall to a six year low for discretionary funding.

“At a time when healthcare costs are skyrocketing, we should be investing more to keep Americans healthy instead of cutting funds for disease prevention,” said Jeff Levi, PhD, Executive Director of TFAH. “Prevention should be the centerpiece of our national healthcare strategy, not an afterthought.”

The proposed CDC budget includes:

- Cutting \$97.2 million from the Prevention Health and Health Services Block Grant, zeroing out funds that states rely on to support disease prevention programs.
- Cutting \$136.7 million from funds for state and local bioterrorism and emergency public health preparedness and \$61.9 million from hospital emergency preparedness programs. The Administration has cut these programs over the past five years, reducing the funding level by one-third. A recent report by the National Association of County and City Health Officials (NACCHO) found cuts have adversely impacted local preparedness.
- Cutting environmental health, zoonotic disease, and disease detection and control programs.

In addition, the Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA) would face a series of severe cuts, which include:

- Cutting rural health programs by \$111.6 million (a 62 percent cut), and poison control programs by 16.5 million (a 86.9 percent cut).
- Cutting \$240.2 million from training health professionals (a 66 percent cut), including \$59.4 million for nursing workforce development (a nearly 50 percent cut), at a time when there is a major public health workforce shortage.

The budget would flat-fund biomedical research at the National Institutes of Health

(NIH).

TFAH issued a new public opinion survey today that finds seven-in-ten Americans want the federal government to invest more in disease prevention and healthy living, with 46 percent saying they want “much more” spending.

The public opinion survey, conducted by Greenberg Quinlan Rosner Research, also finds that:

- A strong majority of Americans (57 percent) believe that investing in preventing disease and promoting healthy lifestyles, in tandem with diagnosis and treatment is the best way to improve the health of Americans.
- Americans believe investing in preventing disease and promoting healthy lifestyles is important to reducing healthcare costs (rating 7.2 on a 10-point scale).
- Americans strongly favor ideas that bring government, businesses, communities, and individuals together to support disease prevention and healthier lifestyles, including improving physical education and reducing junk food in schools, expanding research into causes of disease, providing incentives to business to help employees get or stay healthy, and expanding public education efforts.

The poll was conducted between January 18 and 22, 2008 among 1,005 adults, ages 18 and older. The reported findings include the responses from the 878 registered voters who participated in the survey. The margin of error is +/- 3.1 percent.

Trust for America's Health is a non-profit, non-partisan organization dedicated to saving lives by protecting the health of every community and working to make disease prevention a national priority. www.healthyamericans.org

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