

## Funding Federal Public Health Programs

Katherine Smith, MD, MPH and Timothy Gibbs, MPH, NPMc

In this era of the Zika virus, the increasing rate of chronic disease, and the need to adequately train our medical staff, public health agencies such as the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and the Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA) are on the front line to protect the citizens of the United States. These programs are funded by an annual congressional approval of discretionary spending: the more money congress approves for their use, the safer we, as citizens of the United States, will be.

The CDC is a key source of funding for many statewide and local programs that improve the health of the population of Delaware. They are first in line when it comes to dealing with bioterrorism, virus outbreaks like the South American Zika virus, and the overall health of our nation. They support public health programs, and strive to find new ways to prevent antibiotic resistance, keep the obesity epidemic under control, and teach the public about preventing chronic diseases like heart disease and cancer. They are also charged with preventing infectious diseases like Ebola, West Nile, and SARS from taking hold within the country.

The HRSA supports medical education, and makes sure that our doctors are as well trained as they can be, and that they are prepared to care for an aging, increasingly diverse population. It increases access to primary care for women and children, strives to combat infant mortality, and increases the use of newborn screening tests for common genetic disorders. It provides programs for HIV/ AIDS patients to support care, assist with obtaining the necessary anti-virals, and educate people on how to decrease the risk of HIV transmission. The HRSA also improves access to primary and preventative care for low-income and rural areas, promotes Title X programs to ensure access to preventative healthcare for women, men, and children, and helps rural hospitals and clinics stay current on new technologies and strategies for better health care.

The overall health of our nation depends on agencies and programs like these to decrease the health disparities we see every day, to respond to health threats and emergencies, and to research new and improved ways to keep the population of the United States healthy. These national programs also help to fund state and local programs, workforce, and health departments. Without the discretionary funding provided by congress, they will be unable to do their jobs, and our communities will suffer.

There is no greater investment than in the health of the population, and investing in preventative care saves money. Without our health, we are unable to do our jobs, enjoy life, and have fun. Please, write to your congressmen and women to urge them to fund these public health programs. Let them know that the health of the nation, of the state of Delaware, of the people in your neighborhood, is important to you, and that with their help, we can keep the United States as healthy as possible.

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