

The CPH Update

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HOUSE MEMBERS LAUNCH NEW PUBLIC HEALTH 'CAUCUS'

On February 22, three bipartisan Co-chairs in the House of Representatives launched the Congressional Study Group on Public Health. This new member organization will hold briefings on Capitol Hill to educate congressional leaders and their staff members about the valuable public health work taking place at the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC).

The founding Co-chairs of the organization, Reps. Jim McGovern (D-MA), Kay Granger (R-TX) and Lucille Roybal-Allard (D-CA), each sent staff members on a tour of the CDC's Atlanta campus that CPH organized last summer. After the trip, these offices were eager to ensure others in Congress learned about this federal agency's diverse and essential health protection efforts.

In a letter sent to all members of the House of Representatives, Study Group Co-chairs invited their colleagues to join them in this public health awareness effort. CPH and our partners are also on the Hill spreading the word about this new group. CPH chairman Evan Jones and APHA executive director Dr. Georges Benjamin applauded the leadership demonstrated by these three members in a press release. CPH also pledged to work with our partners to help highlight the work of the Study Group throughout the year. An inaugural briefing is tentatively planned for March 21 titled, "*An Introduction to Public Health – Methods and Benefits of Preventing Death, Disability and Disease.*" Dr. Julie L. Gerberding, director of the CDC, has been invited to join the Co-chairs at this first briefing of the Study Group.

BUSH FY08 BUDGET REQUEST RELEASED, FY07 COMPLETED

Two significant budget milestones were reached in Washington during the month of February. First, the President's fiscal year 2008 (FY08) Budget Request to Congress was released on February 5. Only nine days later, the newly elected Democratic leadership in Congress wrapped up several unfinished FY07 funding bills that out-going Republican leaders could not complete prior to handing over the gavel after the fall elections. CPH included the details of each measure in our updated budget tracking sheet. The spreadsheet can be found on our website.

Administration Cuts CDC by Half a Billion Dollars: FY05 – FY08

President Bush's FY08 budget request to Congress drops funding for the core budget lines of the CDC to \$5.824 billion from a "high water mark" of \$6.321 billion in FY05. This represents a cut to the CDC's core budget of 7.9 percent from FY05. In short, the President's FY08 request to Congress is half a billion dollars below CDC's FY05 funding levels before accounting for inflation.

The President has repeatedly proposed cutting the CDC to fund other Administration priorities. While many may believe the President's budget is "dead on arrival" in the Democrat-controlled Congress, it is important to remember that Democrats must gain the President's signature on a final spending measure this summer.

With the 2008 elections close at hand, Democrats will likely feel pressure to show they can cut the large federal deficit. To return funds to the CDC, congressional leaders will have to do so without increasing overall spending. Significant spending increases for any area of the government, understandably, will be extremely hard to accomplish until the federal deficit is under control.

The FY07 Joint Resolution

CPH commends the leadership of the House and Senate for their successful effort to provide more funding to crucial health programs in the Labor, Health and Human Services and Education (LHHS) Appropriations bill. Without these funds, the budget of the CDC may have faced deep cuts in FY07. A great deal of effort was put forward by the incoming Congress in a very difficult budget environment and several leaders – including Sens. Tom Harkin (D-IA) and Arlen Specter (R-PA) - deserve recognition for their tireless efforts on behalf of health (and education) programs.

The FY07 JR is a marked improvement over the President's proposed FY07 budget request to Congress and provides as much as \$37 million more in core budget funding for the CDC than Congress enacted in FY06. Still, Congress was not able to provide the CDC funding for the agency's core budget lines over and above the CDC's FY05 budget – a year that remains the "high water mark" for the agency.

CPH tracks the CDC's budget throughout the annual appropriations debate and began maintaining a detailed spreadsheet of the CDC's budget in 2005. Our tracking chart helps national media, Congress and our partners follow the debate throughout the year. The FY07 JR was not easily added to this spreadsheet as it has some unique differences from earlier years that make a clean comparison difficult. A change in the treatment of pandemic influenza preparedness funding, \$27 million in non-allocated funding and a rescission of FY06 vaccine funds that were re-allocated to the CDC for FY07 are all covered in more detail on the CPH website.

Now federal agencies must provide Congress with final allocation plans based on the JR by mid March. This plan will shed additional light on CDC's FY07 budget. A full five months into the fiscal year, the FY07 budget debate is just wrapping up – so stay tuned.

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MAKING ‘NOISE’ ABOUT PUBLIC HEALTH

Through interviews with reporters and through our publications, CPH has generated national media stories that highlight the cuts proposed to the CDC by the Bush Administration and the budget situation at the agency. Our messages have also appeared on web logs and in local papers around the country. These efforts help CPH focus the attention of public officials on the importance of public health programs. Another opportunity will come online in early March. Visitors to **Parade Magazine’s** website will be able to post comments on what health issues are on their minds. Our partners in the public health field should visit the site and mention CDC budget cuts, public health protection efforts and other similar topics. This is an opportunity to ensure “public health” is part of the debate.

CPH ADVOCACY GOES DIGITAL

The Campaign for Public Health recently integrated an Internet-based letter-writing tool into our website. Now visitors to www.FundCDC.org can easily advocate for the CDC by sending Congress a pre-drafted constituent letter. An “alert” about the issue can also be found on several national websites such as Yahoo and AOL – helping CPH find new advocates for the CDC. The constituent letter highlights the important work of the CDC, expresses concern about past reductions to the CDC’s core budget lines below FY05 levels and calls on House and Senate members to substantially increase investment in this critical health protection agency.

GERBERDING MEETS 50 CONGRESSIONAL STAFF

On March 2, CDC director Dr. Julie L Gerberding and a dozen of the CDC’s Center directors met in the Dirksen Senate Office Building with more than 50 House and Senate staff. After Dr. Gerberding’s brief overview of the CDC, she and fellow CDC staff fielded detailed questions for over an hour. Sens. Jack Reed (D-RI) and Johnny Isakson (R-GA), in partnership with Rep. Jerry Lewis (R-CA) and the founding Co-chairs of the newly formed **Congressional Study Group on Public Health** – Reps. Jim McGovern, Kay Granger and Lucille Roybal-Allard – organized the meeting. Reed visited the briefing to welcome the director and thank her for her visit. Questions touched on an extensive list of public health topics. A number of partner groups also attended and were able to gain insights into the priorities of congressional staff in the new 110th Congress.

MORE THAN 20 NATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS JOIN “Pro-CDC” MEDIA BLITZ

After working with more than a dozen partner groups in 2006, Ogilvy Public Relations helped CPH produce an exceptional advertisement that 21 groups* will “sign” with their organization’s logo. The ad depicts happy people standing under an umbrella as – in vertical text – illnesses, injuries, diseases and other harmful agents “rain” down from above. The heading states: “CDC protects us all... IN MORE WAYS than you may know.” The ad goes on to highlight the importance of the CDC, the agency’s many strengths and the diverse nature of the health protection work done by the CDC and their state and local partners. The ad also highlights the CPH website to help generate constituent letters to targeted members of Congress when the ad runs in high-priority congressional districts.

CPH expects to launch the ad at an earned media event shortly before the House and Senate have marked up their budget proposals. In addition to running the ad in Washington media markets, partners plan to give the ad to members of Congress during visits to Capitol Hill, sending a clear and unified message to Congress. Partners also offered to publish the ad in their newsletters, journals or other similar publications. Finally, many are helping CPH underwrite the cost of placing the ad in targeted print publications – here and in relevant congressional districts around the country. We welcome your ideas and involvement. The ad will be posted on our site after the event.

* CPH and: ACS, ADA, AHA, AMA, APHA, APHL, American Red Cross, Arthritis Foundation, ASTHO, Home Safety Council, IDSA, March of Dimes, NACCHO, NACDD, NALBOH, National Osteoporosis Foundation, Parent Project Muscular Dystrophy, Partnership for Prevention, Prevent Blindness America, Research! America and the Society for Public Health Education.

STAY ON TOP OF THE CDC FUNDING DEBATE

Visit our website to sign up for e-Updates. While this print publication is mailed semi-annually, we also send “CPH e-Updates” to our email database. These e-publications track the federal public health funding debate in more detail during the entire appropriations process.

GET INVOLVED – Contact CPH to find out how your organization can support our ongoing efforts.

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The Campaign for Public Health is an independent, not-for-profit, 501(c)(4) organization comprised of prominent leaders in the public health community dedicated to advocating for legislation that will accelerate the growth of federal appropriations for the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

Learn more at:
www.FundCDC.org