

Public Health Leader Joins CPH Board

Georges Benjamin, MD, Executive Director of the American Public Health Association has accepted the invitation to join the Board of the Campaign for Public Health. He will fill the role served by Roger Bulger, MD, a founding board member of the Campaign. CPH is grateful to Dr. Bulger for his wisdom and guidance and looks forward to working with Dr. Benjamin, a nationally recognized advocate for public health.

National Media: CDC Cuts are Big News

Based on information in the Campaign's winter mailing and a follow-up interview with the Executive Director, the Washington Bureau of Cox News featured a story on the deep budget cuts to the CDC. The article ran in several of their national newspapers, including the Atlanta Journal-Constitution. This story was then picked up by several web-logs, including the web log for TIME Magazine's senior health writer, Christine Gorman. Ms. Gorman contacted CPH for more information prior to her posting and may have more to say on the issue.

A related development came when a Fort Wayne, Indiana, paper spoke with CPH and wrote an editorial focused on the wrong-headed logic of cutting the CDC's budget. More media stories may be forthcoming. CPH will continue to highlight these with members of Congress. The Indiana editorial, for example, was sent to all members of Indiana's congressional delegation.

Click here to read the [Atlanta Journal-Constitution](#) story regarding the cuts to the CDC.

Showcasing CDC with Congressional Staff

Over the last several months, CPH has worked with Congressional leaders and the House Ethics office to investigate the possibility of a trip to the CDC campus in Atlanta for key staff in the House of Representatives. In mid April, the House Ethics office approved the trip and partner organizations were approached to help support the effort.

Several partners have already stepped forward to pledge support, including: the American Cancer Society, American Heart Association, American Public Health Association, B&D Consulting, National Association of Chronic Disease Directors, Research!America and the Society for Advancement of Violence and Injury Research. While a great deal more work is needed to finalize the details of the trip, CPH is grateful for the positive response of our partners and looks forward to working with all involved.

Congress Returns, Uncertainty Reigns

Last October 23rd, an article in the Washington Post financial section on the troubles facing the federal budget process read, "Republicans remain badly divided – budget hawks versus tax cutters, House leaders versus Senate, White House versus Congress." Not much has changed since last year.

Before leaving for a two-week district work period that ended on April 24th, Congressional leaders felt the sting of defeat on two major bills. The House left Washington without passing a promised budget resolution that would have helped guide future federal funding debates, and Senate efforts to pass immigration reform disintegrated despite a widely reported bipartisan agreement on the issue.

The collapse of these highly visible bills in both the House and Senate highlight the problems still facing the Republicans. Republican leaders are struggling to maintain order in the rank and file membership. No one group within the party – including the leadership – seems to be successfully controlling the budget messages or congressional agenda. Conservative Republicans would like more tax breaks and program cuts, budget hawks want the budget balanced and moderate Republicans are concerned by drastic cuts to key federal programs. Republican leaders in both the House and Senate have not found a way to bridge these differences or work together towards a common goal. The result is continued uncertainty.

Congress: Listening to Folks Back Home

The silver lining in all this uncertainty is that members of Congress desperately want to bet on the winning horse. This was abundantly clear in mid-March during the Senate debate of the Republican budget resolution. Moderate Republican Senator Arlen Specter (PA) and Democrat Tom Harkin (IA) were joined by several other Senators on an amendment to add an additional \$7 billion to the federal budget for health and education programs. Public health organizations worked with education groups to flood the Senate with calls from constituents asking members to support the proposal.

In an unexpected turn of events, twenty-eight Republicans broke with their party and supported the amendment – which passed 73 to 27. The amendment was a huge victory and a great step forward. More importantly, perhaps, it clearly demonstrates that this is an excellent time to reach out to members of Congress. Members are always eager to take a position on issues that will resonate with their constituents, but when the agenda in Washington is vague or an election is pending, members look to constituents for guidance.

Over the next several months, and perhaps on into late November or even December, Congress will debate the various allocations of the federal budget at the committee level, and will take stock of public opinion during dozens of hearings. *Tell Congress not to cut the CDC's budget for the second year in a row. Visit www.FundCDC.org and send Washington our letter found under the "Write Congress" tab.*

Pandemic Influenza on the Agenda

In addition to the regular appropriations process, the Senate is also debating an "emergency" supplemental spending package that provides over \$100 billion in emergency funding to war efforts, continued Hurricane Katrina relief, additional pandemic preparedness and other items of importance. The bill includes \$2.3 billion for the Department of Health and Human Services, of which nearly \$300 million would be available to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention to address several areas related to this global threat. CPH is working with leaders in the House and Senate to highlight the need for pandemic influenza preparedness funding. Former member of Congress Paul Rogers and Mr. Moeller met with Chairman Regula and offered to help move the issue forward. Follow up meetings with House and Senate appropriations staff are pending and we continue to work with key partners on the flu issue.

CPH Joins Vaccine Advocacy Effort

The Campaign attended the first meeting of "The 317 Coalition" and joined this alliance of health leaders. The coalition is an advocacy effort managed by Cornerstone Government Affairs. The goal of the group is to increase Federal discretionary funding for the National Immunization Program at the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

CPH Welcomes Public Health Student

CPH is joined this summer by Kristen Latona, a soon-to-be graduate of George Washington University with a degree in public health. She plans to begin a Masters in public health program this fall. Please help Kristen feel welcome as she works with our Partners over the summer.