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SENATE STAFF TOUR THE CDC'S ATLANTA FACILITIES

With the generous support of more than a dozen partner organizations*, CPH completed its second congressional staff tour of the CDC's Atlanta headquarters at the end of May.

Ten of the participating Senate staff were based in Washington, DC and represented members who sit on several key committees. These include the Budget Committee; the Appropriations Committee and the LHHHS Subcommittee; the Health, Education, Labor and Pensions (HELP) Committee; Homeland Security; Special Aging and several others. An additional three congressional staff joined the tour from local offices of the Georgia congressional delegation.

As on the House staff tour CPH led in 2006, this two-day Senate staff visit included lectures from dozens of the CDC's top scientists on a wide range of public health topics. Participants were also guided through the CDC's emergency response center, the Health Marketing center and the Chamblee Campus' environmental health laboratories—including the CDC's smoking research facility. Staff also enjoyed a rare tour *inside* a newly constructed Bio-Security Level 4 laboratory that will be certified for use (and closed to visitors) in the near future. At the end of the first day, participating partner groups joined Senate staff at a reception and dinner. During the reception, **Dr. Gerberding** called the group from overseas to welcome them to the CDC.

CONGRESSIONAL STUDY GROUP ON PUBLIC HEALTH

The new congressional "caucus" founded by Representatives McGovern (D-MA), Granger (R-TX) and Roybal-Allard (D-CA) to explore a wide range of public health topics, held its third and fourth congressional briefings this summer. In June the broad topic of **vector-borne disease** was covered by experts from the CDC, Yale University and the Environmental Protection Agency. In early July a briefing on **workplace wellness** was held in partnership with the Prevention Caucus, the U.S. Chamber of Commerce, the American College of Preventive Medicine and Partnership for Prevention. Speakers for this event included senior representatives from the CDC, Dow Chemical Company, Wegmans Food Markets and the American Medical Association. Material from these events will be made available on the Campaign for Public Health's web site.

Additional briefings on immunizations and global health are on the Congressional Study Group on Public Health's agenda between now and the fall.

NEW "Pro-CDC" ADVERTISEMENT HAILS 73 SUPPORTING ORGANIZATIONS

The Campaign for Public Health's pro-CDC advertisement originally listed 21 national organizations when it was released in February. Since that time, several dozen *additional* organizations requested to join our effort to highlight the importance of this agency. The ad was recently re-crafted by Ogilvy Public Relations and now **lists 73 groups and coalitions**. A flier highlighting the ad will be sent to all Congressional offices in the near future. Partner groups are encouraged to distribute the ad to legislators as well —particularly between now and September.

CPH ORGANIZES PUBLIC HEALTH MEETING WITH SPEAKER NANCY PELOSI

Speaker Nancy Pelosi and her senior health and appropriations staffers met with CPH leaders and public health experts on May 10. Former members of Congress John Edward Porter and Paul G. Rogers were joined by CPH Board members Dr. Georges Benjamin and Jennifer Luray. Dr. Michael McGinnis of the Institute of Medicine and CPH executive director Karl Moeller also attended the meeting. The group detailed the real declines in the CDC's budget since FY02 and impressed upon her the negative impact an erosion of core CDC programs would have on our nation's health.

FACT SHEETS & POWERPOINTS BOLSTER WEB SITE

A new **issue specific** area of CPH's web site is making partner handouts, relevant PowerPoint's and materials from past Study Group meetings available to the public. Partner and CDC materials from the May trip to Atlanta are already available – benefiting Hill staff who were not able to attend the Atlanta tour. *Partner groups with concise CDC-related fact sheets are encouraged to contact Kristen Latona at KristenL@FundCDC.org so these materials can be considered for this new section.* Additional public health topics will be added as material becomes available. **Also of note:** CPH web site traffic has nearly doubled since last summer and has exploded by a factor of ten since the summer of 2005.

* **Groups that supported the staff trip to Atlanta:** Arthritis Foundation, American Diabetes Association, American Heart Association, American Public Health Association, American Red Cross, Home Safety Council, March of Dimes, National Alliance of State & Territorial AIDS Directors, National Association of Chronic Disease Directors, National Association of County and City Health Officials, National Safety Council, Partnership for Prevention and Research!America.

CONGRESS MOVES FORWARD ON FY08 SPENDING BILLS...

July 2007 promises to be a busy month for the Labor, Health and Human Services and Education Appropriations bill. Both the House and Senate have produced a version of the LHHS bill, though the House bill includes \$2 billion more in overall funding than the Senate bill. This bill funds the CDC and most other health agencies and programs. As of press time, the House of Representatives expects a vote on the bill in the full House by mid-month. The Senate's Committee-passed bill looks promising for the CDC, but the Senate leadership has yet to set a date to consider the Senate bill. Consideration of the bill by the full Senate is said to be set for late July—just prior to the August congressional recess.

The Senate bill (S.1710) currently provides the CDC's "core programs" with \$6.585 billion, while the House number is slightly less—giving the agency's core budget lines \$6.447 billion. In both cases this figure includes pandemic flu funding, although the Senate bill is less complicated in this regard. Its bill does not "mix" flu dollars in with core CDC program lines but instead proposes to transfer \$158 million in flu funding to the CDC from the Public Health and Social Services Emergency Fund after passage of the bill. The Senate's flu funding mechanism is in line with CPH requests to clearly account for such funding as these ever-changing amounts complicate year-to-year comparisons across core program budget lines.

Both the House and Senate bills are a tremendous step in the right direction for the CDC. While the agency's budget kept up with inflation from FY02 to FY05, years of cuts or level funding of the agency since that time has eaten away the CDC's core programs. While neither of the proposals replace all the ground lost to inflation since 2005, CPH is pleased both the House and Senate bills move the agency in a very positive direction.

... BUT — BUSH THREATENS VETO

Should these dollar figures and dates hold, Congress will return late in the summer to conference the House and Senate bills together into one measure. That bill would then be sent to President Bush. It is still unclear what type of reception the LHHS bill will have upon arrival at the White House as Democrats in Congress have provided more funds to the CDC (and other such agencies) than the White House requested. In May, Office of Management and Budget Director Rob Portman sent a letter to Congress threatening that the President will "*veto any appropriations bill that exceeds his request until Congress demonstrates a sustainable path that keeps discretionary spending within the President's topline of \$933 billion and ensures that the Department of Defense has the resources necessary to accomplish its mission.*" The Senate provided the LHHS bill alone with \$10 billion more than the President requested while the House budget allocation is higher still. This is part of the reason that Congress has been able to overturn his proposed cuts to the CDC in their bills.

Still, during a meeting in a senior Republican appropriations committee member's office, CPH staff was told that Republican willingness to stand with the President and sustain a veto of this popular health funding bill will depend greatly on the President's popularity at the time—and current trends are not good for the President. Another factor, of course, would be the popularity of the legislation itself. To this point, Democrats in Congress are working to shore-up support for the LHHS bill early in the process—making a veto threat all that much more uncomfortable for the President and Republicans in Congress. Unlike the President, all House members will face a reelection effort in 2008 – and the LHHS bill has always provided good sound bites for campaign commercials.

OTHER CPH NEWS

Jennifer M. Luray of Abbott Laboratories – a former Hill staff member and extremely knowledgeable advocate for health, agreed to join the Board of the Campaign for Public Health in March of 2007. Also of note, CPH is currently undergoing our annual audit and will publish a 2006 Annual Report soon after the audit is completed.

THANKS TO OUR NON-PROFIT PARTNERS

Voluntary donations to the Campaign for Public Health from unaffiliated non-profit partners are almost three times higher than they were in all of 2006. Such support helped CPH run our partner advertisement and ensured that congressional staff members saw the CDC's work first hand. While there is much more to do, CPH wishes to thank our contributing non-profit partners. We have accomplished a great deal with their help and support.

CAMPAIGN FOR PUBLIC HEALTH

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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