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Advancing child health through public policy

Washington Update

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President Releases FY 2015 Budget Request

On March 4, the President released details of the Administration’s FY 2015 budget request. The proposal contains significant investments in poverty-reduction efforts by extending unemployment insurance, increasing income-based tax credits, raising the minimum wage and expanding the Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children fruit and vegetable voucher to provide healthier food for families in need. The budget contains continued funding for the Affordable Care Act (ACA), including an extension of the Medicaid payment increase for an additional year and funding to extend the Children’s Health Insurance Program (CHIP). Additionally, the budget request contains \$30.2 billion in funding for the National Institutes of Health (NIH), an increase of \$200 million over the FY 2014 omnibus appropriations bill. Within this, the Eunice Kennedy Shriver National Institute of Child Health and Human Development (NICHD) would receive \$1.28 billion, an increase of \$2.6 million over FY 2014, and the National Children’s Study would receive flat funding of \$165 million.

Although the President's budget contained these important programs, the President did not include funding in his FY 2015 proposal for the Pediatric Subspecialty Loan Repayment program for the first time in three years. Further, the request proposed eliminating funding for the Children's Hospital Graduate Medical Education (CHGME) program in favor of a new "targeted" support program (see next article for more details).

President Proposes Gutting CHGME with New "Targeted" Graduate Medical Education Program

As part of its FY 2015 budget request released on March 4, the Administration proposed replacing the current CHGME program with the Targeted Support for Graduate Medical Education program. The program would be funded at \$530 million through a transfer from the Medicare Insurance Trust Fund and would incorporate both the Children's Hospital Graduate Medical Education program and Teaching Health Center Graduate Medical Education program. Current awardees in each program will be able to compete for funding through the program, however only \$100 million would be set aside for children's hospitals for both FY 2015 and FY 2016. This would involve a substantial cut from the current CHGME program that garnered \$265 million in the FY 2014 omnibus appropriations bill. Other children's health groups, including the Children's Hospital Association, have strongly opposed the change, indicating that eliminating support for CHGME, which enables dozens of children's hospitals to train approximately half of the nation's pediatricians and pediatric subspecialists, puts at risk the gains made in child health through the program since its inception in 1999. Historically, the CHGME program has continued to garner strong support in both the House and Senate, and it is unlikely that the President's proposed change, which would require legislation, would be approved by Congress.

Senate Passes Gabriella Miller Kids First Research Act

On Monday, the Gabriella Miller Kids First Research Act passed the Senate by voice vote and will be sent to the President for his signature. The White House has indicated that President Obama will sign the measure. The House of Representatives passed the bill under suspension of the rules 295 – 103 in December. The bill would defund the Presidential Election Campaign Fund for national party conventions and would reallocate that funding, \$126 million over 10 years, to the National Institutes of Health (NIH) for pediatric research. While the bill would create a fund for NIH research, it would still be subject to appropriations so it is unclear whether actual funding will materialize.

Sen. Durbin Announces New Research Funding Bill

On Tuesday, Sen. Dick Durbin (D-Ill.) announced the America Helping Encourage Advancements in Lifesaving Science (HEALS) Act at a speech at the Center for National Policy. The legislation would create a dedicated, mandatory funding stream to provide additional support for four biomedical research agencies: the National Institutes of Health (NIH), the Centers for Disease Control (CDC), the Department of Defense Health Program (DHP), and the Veterans Medical and Prosthetics Research Program. The

program would increase funding for each program at a rate of GDP + 5% and would cost \$150 billion over 10 years. Details of the bill may be found [here](#).

PPC Sessions at PAS 2014

There will be two PPC-led sessions at the Pediatric Academic Societies conference held May 2 – May 6 in Vancouver, British Columbia. The PPC Plenary Session on state implementation of the Affordable Care Act will take place from 10:30 a.m. – 12:30 p.m. on May 3. The PPC Legislative Breakfast on the future of pediatric research funding will be held on May 5 from 7:00 a.m. – 8:00 a.m.

Save the Date: Legislative Conference 2014

Mark your calendar! The AAP's 2014 Legislative Conference will be held June 15, 2014 – June 17, 2014, in Washington, DC. Join pediatricians from across the country and learn how you can become a strong advocate for the children you care for. Please visit www.aap.org/legcon for more information about the conference, including a brochure, scholarships, and how to register.