

# HEALTH SECURITY IS NATIONAL SECURITY

*"I think of you as the biomedical equivalent of the Pentagon"*

*-Rep. Tom Cole (R-OK), speaking to Centers for Disease Control & Prevention Director, March 10, 2020*

Funding for public health preparedness programs decreased by over 30% since 2002. Addressing outbreaks such as COVID-19 requires a strong and coordinated response which is reliant upon predictable and sustained investments by Congress for the entire public health continuum, not only in times of crisis, but also in times of calm. Preparedness, adequate funding, and strong support for public health can be the best investment in these expected events --- as our nation will face a challenge every year whether a health security threat, disease pandemic, or natural disaster. Congress must commit to the necessary investments to protect and promote the health of all.

Public health is one of the oldest government functions, dating back to 1798 when Congress first authorized the Marine Hospital Service to deliver care to merchant seamen who had a higher incidence of disease. From this single federal investment stemmed the beginnings of the Public Health Service, first codified by the Public Health Service Act in 1944.

## Pandemic Preparedness

The lack of investment in our public health infrastructure is dramatically evident as America responds to the current COVID-19 crisis. From the inability to track and monitor infections, to the insufficient staff and inadequate stock of personal protective equipment and ventilators, our nation has been playing catch-up in our efforts to control this virus because of years of inadequate funding. This shortfall is evidenced in the billions of dollars Congress has appropriated in the midst of the pandemic to respond and support our needs. At the same time, state and local governments face challenges from the dwindling blood supply, increased child care needs, and the increasing strain on health professionals, first responders, and hospital systems. Preparedness, adequate funding, and strong support for public health can be the best tool in combatting these expected events.

Congress must commit to the necessary investments to ensure that lives are not needlessly lost to predictable and preventable crises.

*"We have learned from the past decades that it is important to have strong global surveillance systems; transparency and honest communication with the public; strong public health and health care infrastructure, or capacity building efforts where needed; coordinated and collaborative basic and clinical research; and the development of universal platform technologies to enable the rapid development of vaccines, diagnostics, and therapeutics."*

*-Dr. Anthony Fauci, Director of the National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Disease, Health Affairs 2017*

## Protect Americans: Invest in Health

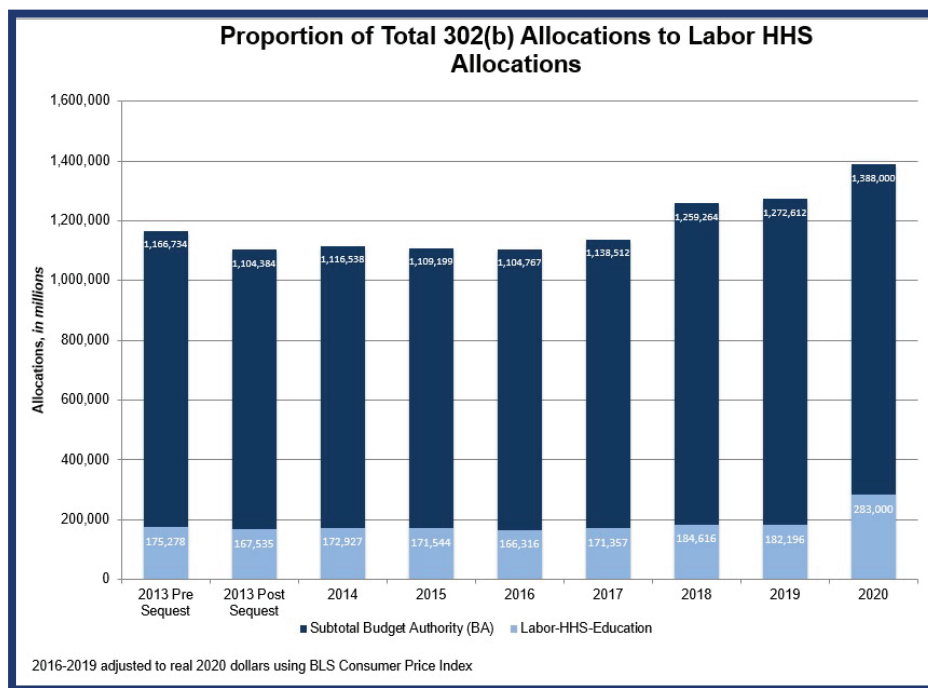
The foremost responsibility of the federal government is to protect and defend Americans against threats, both foreign and domestic. Shortchanging public health and health research programs leaves Americans vulnerable to health threats. The coronavirus was not the first, and it will not be the last public health crisis our country will have to face, nor is it the only one with which we are currently battling. As demonstrated time and time again, public health hazards such as opioid abuse, antibiotic resistance, diabetes, obesity, cancer, foodborne illness, lead poisoning, and others illustrate the need for continued investment by the federal government in America's health.

**COALITION** *for* **HEALTH FUNDING**

# Federal Health Funding: It's Less Than You Think

Over the years the 302(b) allocation, or funding level, for the Labor, Health and Human Services, and Related Agencies appropriations bill has been woefully inadequate. The legislation, also referred to as “The People’s Bill” because it provides funding for many programs that are integral to Americans’ lives, covers funding for public health programs like biomedical research, disease control and prevention, and health care workforce training. It also provides funding for education programs, social services, and more.

In Fiscal year (FY) 2020, the Labor HHS (302b) allocation was only 20% of federal discretionary spending and 6% percent of all federal spending. The LHHHS appropriations have lost almost \$16 billion in purchasing power over the last decade. It would take an allocation of \$199 billion just to return to the FY 2010 level in inflation-adjusted dollars. This stagnation in funding risks the safety net that these agencies provide for every American: providing millions of children, families, and seniors with access to care, keeping the food on Americans’ shelves safe and infectious diseases at bay, and pushing the boundaries of how we diagnose and treat disease.



Under the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS), these key agencies and programs work together to support the full spectrum of activities necessary to truly improve health—by moving health improvement strategies from the bench to bedside to curbside.

- **The Administration for Community Living (ACL)** maximizes the independence, well-being, and health of older adults, people with disabilities across the lifespan, and their families and caregivers.
- **The Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality (AHRQ)** provides evidence to improve health care costs, quality, and access through funding to local universities and research centers.
- **The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC)** is the nation’s first responder in health emergencies, and supports people in living healthier, longer.
- **The Food and Drug Administration (FDA)** ensures that food, drugs, medical devices, and cosmetics that come to market are safe and effective.
- **The Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA)** supports the pipeline for new health providers and delivers health services in our nation’s communities.
- **The Indian Health Service (IHS)** funds health services and local facilities that serve American Indian and Alaska Native populations.
- **The National Institutes of Health (NIH)** discovers cures and treatments for illness—physical and behavioral—through funding to local universities and research centers.
- **The Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA)** supports communities in providing treatment and prevention to those in need.