



April 21, 2011

The Honorable Dennis R. Rehberg
Chairman
Appropriations Subcommittee on Labor,
Health and Human Services, Education
and Related Agencies
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Rosa L. DeLauro
Ranking Member
Appropriations Subcommittee on Labor,
Health and Human Services, Education
and Related Agencies
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairman Rehberg and Ranking Member DeLauro:

The National Center for Health Statistics (NCHS) is the nation's principal health statistics agency. Housed within the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), it provides critical data on all aspects of our health care system through data cooperatives and surveys that serve as a gold standard for data collection around the world. The Friends of NCHS endorses the President's FY 2012 request of \$162 million. This funding will build on your previous investments and put the agency on track to become a fully-functioning, 21st Century, national statistical agency.

NCHS collects data on chronic disease prevalence, health care disparities, emergency room use, teen pregnancy, infant mortality, causes of death, and rates of insurance to name a few. These data are used by the Census Bureau in informing its population estimates and projections; by USDA in developing nutrition policies that undergird multibillion dollar federal food assistance programs; by state and local governments and public health officials; by federal policymakers; and by demographers, epidemiologists, health services researchers, and other scientists. The health data collected by NCHS are an essential part of the nation's statistical and public health infrastructure, as demonstrated by the breadth of organizations participating in the Friends of NCHS.

The undersigned organizations greatly appreciate your leadership in securing steady and sustained funding increases for NCHS. Your support has helped NCHS rebuild after years of underinvestment and restore the collection of essential health data. With your continued support, NCHS will modernize its data collection efforts to produce higher quality, more timely data. For example, the President's budget request will allow NCHS to:

- Support all states in collecting consistent, comprehensive birth and death data and implement electronic records to enhance data timeliness and security;

- Expand sample size in surveys such as the National Health Interview Survey, to allow for better state and community estimates about the uninsured, barriers to care, and risk factors across racial and ethnic populations;
- Better monitor obesity rates, especially among children and minority populations, and the performance of preventive interventions, such as nutrition education and fitness programs for youth, through improvements to the National Health and Nutrition Examination Survey.
- Fund new surveys on emerging issues such as health care delivery in assisted living facilities.

As you prepare the FY 2012 Labor-HHS-Education Appropriations bill, we respectfully ask that you provide NCHS with **\$162 million**, consistent with the President's budget request, to strengthen these and other important data collection and quality improvement initiatives. The Friends of NCHS thank you for your ongoing support of health data and look forward to helping you further strengthen the agency.

The Friends of the NCHS is a coalition of over 200 organizations that want to ensure the agency's continued vital role in monitoring our nation's health. For more information on the Friends of NCHS, contact the Emily Holubowich at 202.484.1100 or eholubowich@dc-crd.com.

Sincerely,

Academic Pediatric Association
Advocates for Better Children's Diets
American Academy of Pediatrics
American Association of Colleges of Nursing
American Association of Colleges of Pharmacy
American Association of Colleges of Osteopathic Medicine
American Association for Dental Research
American Association for Respiratory Care
American Academy of Pediatrics
American College of Clinical Pharmacy
American Congress of Obstetricians and Gynecologists
American Heart Association
American Pediatric Society
American Psychiatric Association
American Psychological Association
American Public Health Association
American Organization of Nurse Executives
American Statistical Association
American Society for Nutrition
American Society for Reproductive Medicine
Aplastic Anemia & MDS International Foundation
Association for Prevention Teaching and Research
Association of American Medical Colleges

Association of Maternal and Child Health Programs
Association of Medical School Pediatric Department Chairs
Association of Population Centers
Association of State & Territorial Health Officials
Association of Women's Health, Obstetric and Neonatal Nurses
Coalition for Health Services Research
Commissioned Officers Association of the U.S. Public Health Service, Inc.
Consortium of Social Science Associations
Council of Professional Associations on Federal Statistics
Marketing Research Association
March of Dimes
National Association for Public Health Statistics and Information Systems
National Osteoporosis Foundation
National Psoriasis Foundation
Population Association of America
Research!America
Southeast Michigan Census Council
Society for Pediatric Research
The National Campaign to Prevent Teen and Unplanned Pregnancy