

The Honorable Thad Cochran
Chairman, U.S. Senate Appropriations Committee
Room S128, The Capitol
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Barbara Mikulski
Vice Chairwoman, U.S. Senate Appropriations
Committee
503 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C., 20510

The Honorable Harold Rogers
Chairman, U.S. House Committee on
Appropriations
H-305, The Capitol
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Nita Lowey
Ranking Member, U.S. House Committee on
Appropriations
1016 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

November 20, 2015

Dear Chairman Cochran, Vice Chairwoman Mikulski, Chairman Rogers, and Ranking Member Lowey—

As you work to finish the Labor, Health and Human Services funding bill for fiscal year (FY) 2016, the undersigned 121 organizations urge you to fund the Division of STD Prevention (DSTDP) at the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) at the highest level possible and reject the devastating 20 percent cut proposed in the Senate Committee's FY 2016 bill.

Data released just this week by the CDC (available at www.cdc.gov/std/stats14) further underscores why a cut at this time would be devastating to STD prevention and control across the country. This data shows that for the first time in nearly a decade, rates for all three of these infections increased in 2014, driven predominantly by increases in men. Most notably, rates for primary and secondary syphilis, which are the most infectious stages of syphilis, increased by a shocking 15 percent in 2014, on top of a 10 percent increase in 2013 and an 11 percent increase in 2012.

In addition, a *Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Report* released by the CDC last week further highlighted the extent of the current syphilis epidemic in the United States: congenital syphilis increased by 38 percent between 2012 and 2014. The congenital syphilis rate for 2014 is the highest rate seen in almost 15 years. Congenital syphilis increases were seen in all races and ethnicities and in every region of the country. While syphilis is primarily a sexually transmitted disease, it may be passed on by an infected woman during pregnancy which may lead to serious health problems including premature birth, stillbirth, and in some cases, death shortly after birth.

This is a time when the health care delivery system needs public health leadership and additional investments in this work are required to ensure this leadership. Cuts to our public health system at the federal, state, and local levels have already hindered public health capacity and this diminished capacity simply cannot adequately address STD increases of this magnitude. We call on Congress to continue federal STD prevention investments so health departments and their partners can continue to ensure all of those at risk for STDs are getting tested and correctly treated, vital contact tracing is being implemented to stop the spread of disease, and additional resources can be dedicated to better understand what is causing these dramatic increases in STD

rates. Many states rely solely on federal funds for their state STD prevention and control efforts, and this proposed cut would likely end CDC's ability to fund all state health departments for STD prevention and control.

Please reject the Senate's proposed cut and fund the Division of STD Prevention at the highest level possible in the final FY 2016 Appropriations bill.

Thank you for your attention to this matter. Please contact Stephanie Arnold Pang, Director of Policy and Communications at the National Coalition of STD Directors, at sarnold@ncsddc.org or 202-715-3865, for any additional information.

Signed,

30 for 30 Campaign

ACRIA (New York)

Advocates for Youth

African American Health Alliance (Maryland)

AIDS Action Committee of Massachusetts (Massachusetts)

AIDS Alabama (Alabama)

AIDS Alliance for Women, Infants, Children, Youth & Families

AIDS Foundation of Chicago (Illinois)

AIDS Project Los Angeles (California)

AIDS Project Los Angeles Health & Wellness (California)

AIDS Research Consortium of Atlanta (Georgia)

AIDS Resource Center of Wisconsin (Wisconsin)

AIDS United

Alabaster (Maryland)

Alaska Native Tribal Health Consortium (Alaska)

American Academy of HIV Medicine (AAHIVM)

American Congress of Obstetricians and Gynecologists

American Medical Student Association

American Psychological Association

American Public Health Association

American School Health Association

American Sexual Health Association

American Sexually Transmitted Diseases Association (ASTDA)

American Society for Clinical Pathology

American Society for Reproductive Medicine

Asian & Pacific Islander American Health Forum (California)

Association of Maternal & Child Health Programs (AMCHP)

Association of Public Health Laboratories

Association of State and Territorial Health Officials

Athlete Ally (New York)

AVAC (New York)

Black AIDS Institute (California)

CAEAR Coalition

Caring Ambassadors Program (Oregon)

Cascade AIDS Project (Oregon)
Center for Reproductive Rights
Center for Women Policy Studies
CenterLink: The Community of LGBT Centers (Florida)
Cincinnati Exchange Project (Ohio)
Clearinghouse on Women's Issues
Commissioned Officers Association of the U.S. Public Health Service, Inc. (COA)
Community Access National Network (CANN)
Community Health Outreach Work to Prevent AIDS Project (CHOW Project, Hawaii)
Community HIV/Hepatitis Advocates of Iowa Network (CHAIN, Iowa)
Empowerment Resource Center (Georgia)
Equality Federation (California)
Family Equality Council
Fenway Health (Massachusetts)
Gay Men's Health Crisis (GMHC, New York)
Georgia AIDS Coalition (Georgia)
Girls Inc.
GLMA: Health Professionals Advancing LGBT Equality
God's Love We Deliver (New York)
Grady Health System (Georgia)
HealthHIV
Healthy Teen Network
Hennepin County Public Health Department (Minnesota)
Hepatitis Education Project (Washington state)
Hepatitis Foundation International (HFI)
HIV Dental Alliance (Georgia)
HIV Medicine Association
HIV Prevention Justice Alliance
Howard Brown Health Center (Illinois)
Human Rights Campaign
Institute for Science and Human Values, Inc. (ISHV, Florida)
Iris House (New York)
Justice Resource Institute (Massachusetts)
Latino Commission on AIDS (New York)
League of United Latin American Citizens (LULAC)
Legacy Community Health (Texas)
Louisiana Latino Health Coalition for HIV/AIDS Awareness (LLHC, Louisiana)
Marriage Equality USA
Minnesota AIDS Project (Minnesota)
Multicultural AIDS Coalition (Massachusetts)
Nashville CARES (Tennessee)
National Alliance of State and Territorial Health Officials (NASTAD)
National Association of County and City Health Officials
National Black Gay Men's Advocacy Coalition
National Center for Lesbian Rights
National Coalition of STD Directors

National Council of Jewish Women
National Family Planning & Reproductive Health Association
National Female Condom Coalition
National Foundation for Infectious Diseases
National Latina Institute for Reproductive Health
National Latino AIDS Action Network
National Organization for Women
National Recreation and Park Association
National Viral Hepatitis Roundtable
National Women's Health Network
National Women's Law Center
Nevada Division of Public and Behavioral Health (Nevada)
Okaloosa AIDS Support & Informational Services (OASIS, Florida)
Planned Parenthood Federation of America
Positive Women's Network - USA (California)
Positive Women's Network-USA-Ohio Chapter (Ohio)
Pozitively Healthy
Project Inform (California)
Racial and Ethnic Health Disparities Coalition (Maryland)
Rhode Island Public Health Institute (Rhode Island)
Rural AIDS Action Network (Minnesota)
Rural Women's Health Project (Florida)
Ryan White Medical Providers Coalition
San Francisco AIDS Foundation (California)
Sexuality Information and Education Council of the U.S. (SIECUS)
SisterLove, Inc. (Georgia)
Southern AIDS Coalition (Alabama)
Southern HIV/AIDS Strategy Initiative (North Carolina)
Tennessee Department of Health (Tennessee)
The AIDS Institute
The Cave Institute (Maryland)
The Childhood & Family Learning Foundation (Louisiana)
The Hepatitis C Mentor and Support Group (New York)
The Los Angeles LGBT Center (California)
The National Coalition for LGBT Health
Treatment Action Group (New York)
Urban Coalition for HIV/AIDS Prevention Services (UCHAPS)
URGE: Unite for Reproductive & Gender Equity
Utah Department of Health (Utah)
VillageCare (New York)
Women Organized to Respond to Life-threatening Diseases (WORLD, California)

CC: Members, Senate and House Appropriations Committees