

**TESTIMONY ON BEHALF OF MARCH OF DIMES REGARDING FISCAL YEAR 2019 APPROPRIATIONS
FOR THE DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES**

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MARCH OF DIMES: FISCAL YEAR 2019 FEDERAL FUNDING PRIORITIES

PROGRAM	FISCAL YEAR 2019 REQUEST
National Institutes of Health (total)	\$39,300,000,000
National Institute of Child Health and Development	\$1,531,000,000
National Human Genome Research Institute	\$587,342,000
National Institute on Minority Health and Disparities	\$312,000,000
National Institute of Environmental Health Sciences	\$792,200,000
National Children’s Study Alternative (ECHO)	\$165,000,000
Zika in Infants and Pregnancy (ZIP) Study (NICHD/NIAID)	\$5,000,000
Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (total)	\$8,445,000,000
National Center for Birth Defects and Developmental Disabilities	\$150,560,000
<i>Zika Response Activities</i>	\$10,000,000
<i>Birth Defects Research and Surveillance</i>	\$19,000,000
<i>Folic Acid Campaign</i>	\$3,150,000
Section 317 Immunization Program	\$650,000,000
Newborn Screening Quality Assurance Program	\$29,800,000
Polio Eradication	\$174,000,000
Safe Motherhood Initiative	\$53,000,000
<i>Preterm Birth</i>	\$2,000,000
Office on Smoking and Health	\$216,500,000
National Center for Health Statistics	\$175,000,000
Health Resources and Services Administration (total)	\$8,560,000,000
Title V Maternal and Child Health Block Grant	\$660,000,000
<i>SPRANS- Infant Mortality and Preterm Birth</i>	\$3,000,000
Heritable Disorders	\$21,880,000
Universal Newborn Hearing	\$18,174,000
Healthy Start	\$103,500,000
Grants for Maternal Depression Screening and Treatment	\$5,000,000
Title X Family Planning Program	\$327,000,000
Office of the Secretary Health - Teen Pregnancy Prevention	\$130,000,000
Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality (total)	\$454,000,000

March of Dimes, a unique collaboration of scientists, clinicians, parents, members of the business community, and other volunteers representing every state, the District of Columbia and

Puerto Rico, appreciates this opportunity to submit testimony for the record on fiscal year 2019 (FY19) appropriations for the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS). March of Dimes leads the fight for the health of all mothers and infants through our research, community services, education, and advocacy. Our organization recommends the aforementioned funding levels for programs and initiatives that are essential investments in maternal and child health.

Zika Virus: Our nation continues to face a significant threat to infant health in the form of a mosquito-borne virus that causes life-altering birth defects. March of Dimes commends Congress for providing supplemental funding in FY17 to respond to the Zika virus, but it is imperative that Congress sustain that investment in FY19 and beyond to address the full span of activities necessary to track infections, research the virus, and provide needed services to impacted families. This includes a wide range of ongoing activities throughout HHS agencies, including vaccine research at the National Institutes of Health (NIH); vector control, diagnostic testing, public education, and birth defects surveillance at the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC); and much more. Specifically, March of Dimes requests at least \$5 million for NIH to continue the Zika in Infants and Pregnancy (ZIP) study, a multi-country study to evaluate the near- and long-term health risks Zika virus infection poses to pregnant women, developing fetuses and infants. March of Dimes also urges the Committee to provide at least \$10 million to the CDC's National Center on Birth Defects and Developmental Disabilities (NCBDDD) to support ongoing Zika-related birth defects prevention, surveillance and research activities, as proposed in President Donald Trump's FY19 Budget.

Eunice Kennedy Shriver National Institute of Child Health and Human Development

(NICHD): March of Dimes recommends that Congress provide at least \$1.531 billion for NICHD's

groundbreaking biomedical research activities in FY19. Increased funding will allow NICHD to sustain vital research on preterm birth and related issues through extramural grants, Maternal-Fetal Medicine Units, the Neonatal Research Network and the intramural research program. This funding would also allow NICHD to continue investments in transdisciplinary research to identify the causes of preterm birth, as recommended in the Director's 2012 Scientific Vision for the next decade, the Institute of Medicine 2006 report on preterm birth, and the 2008 Surgeon General's Conference on the Prevention of Preterm Birth. Funding for NICHD will also support continuing research to determine the health risks that Zika virus infection poses to pregnant women and their developing fetuses and infants and how medication impacts the health of pregnant and lactating women and their infants, as well as men's reproductive health.

Title V Maternal and Child Health Block Grant Program: March of Dimes recommends funding the Title V Maternal and Child Health Block Grant Program at \$660 million. March of Dimes also recommends Congress specify that \$3 million within the Title V Special Projects of Regional and National Significance account be used to support current preterm birth and infant mortality initiatives, as authorized in the PREEMIE Reauthorization Act (P.L. 113-55). This funding will support the Collaborative Improvement & Innovation Network (CoIIN) to Reduce Infant Mortality, which assists states focusing on a range of interventions proven to reduce preterm birth and improve maternal and child health.

Safe Motherhood Initiative: The mission of the Safe Motherhood Initiative at the CDC's National Center for Chronic Disease Prevention and Health Promotion is to promote optimal reproductive and infant health. March of Dimes recommends funding of \$53 million for the Safe Motherhood program, an increase of \$7 million over FY18. The additional money would be used

to fund CDC's efforts to address the nation's alarming number of maternal deaths by supporting state-based maternal mortality review committees. March of Dimes also strongly urges maintenance of the preterm birth sub-line at \$2 million, as authorized in the PREEMIE Reauthorization Act, to maintain ongoing and essential preterm birth research at CDC.

National Center on Birth Defects and Developmental Disabilities: NCBDDD is the lead federal agency tasked with supporting vital surveillance, research, and prevention activities on birth defects and developmental disabilities. Given the center's expertise, NCBDDD staff are playing a vital role in the international and domestic response to the Zika virus. For FY19, March of Dimes urges the Committee to provide \$150.56 million to NCBDDD, an increase of \$10 million over FY18, to support the center's core work while sustaining enhanced birth defects surveillance systems put in place in key jurisdictions to monitor Zika-related birth defects.

Newborn Screening: March of Dimes urges funding of \$29.8 million for CDC's Newborn Screening Quality Assurance Program (NSQAP) and \$21.9 million for the Health Resources and Services Administration's Heritable Disorders program, which play critical roles in assisting states in the adoption of additional screenings, educating providers and consumers, and ensuring coordinated follow-up care. The Heritable Disorders program also supports the work of the Advisory Committee on Heritable Disorders in Newborns and Children (ACHDNC), which provides recommendations to the HHS Secretary for conditions to be included in the Recommended Uniform Screening Panel (RUSP). In recent years, the ACHDNC has added three new conditions to the RUSP, bringing the total number of recommended screens to 34. Additional funding for NSQAP and the Heritable Disorders program is crucial to ensure states have adequate funds and technical assistance to implement screening tests for these new additions to the RUSP.

Grants for Maternal Depression Screening and Treatment: Research shows that up to one in seven pregnant women or new mothers experience some sort of maternity-related depression, yet only about 15 percent of those affected receive treatment. The 21st Century Cures Act (P.L. 114-255) seeks to address this gap by authorizing a grant program for states to improve screening for and treatment of maternal depression in pregnant women and those who have given birth in the past 12 months. March of Dimes appreciates that Congress provided funding for this new and innovative grant program in FY18 and urges the Committee to make available the full authorized amount of \$5 million available again in FY19.

Funding to Promote Optimal Birth Spacing and Improved Birth Outcomes: Research shows that appropriate birth spacing – waiting at least 18 months between pregnancies – can dramatically reduce the risk of poor birth outcomes. Additionally, we know that the youngest mothers have some of the worst birth outcomes. We can mitigate these risk factors by ensuring women have access to evidence-based counseling and education prior to pregnancy and access to all forms of contraception approved by the Food and Drug Administration. To support these important goals, March of Dimes recommends funding of \$327 million for Title X Family Planning Program and \$130 million for the Teen Pregnancy Prevention Program administered by the Office of the Assistant Secretary for Health.

Conclusion: March of Dimes volunteers and staff look forward to working with appropriators and all of Congress to secure the resources needed to improve the health of our nation's mothers, infants, children and families.