

May 6, 2013

The Honorable Tom Harkin  
Chairman  
Senate Appropriations Subcommittee  
on Labor, HHS and Education  
131 Dirksen Senate Office Building  
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Jerry Moran  
Ranking Member  
Senate Appropriations Subcommittee  
on Labor, HHS and Education  
131 Dirksen Senate Office Building  
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Jack Kingston  
Chairman  
House Appropriations Subcommittee  
on Labor, HHS, and Education  
2358B Rayburn House Office Building  
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Rosa DeLauro  
Ranking Member  
House Appropriations Subcommittee  
on Labor, HHS, and Education  
2358B Rayburn House Office Building  
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairmen Harkin and Kingston and Ranking Members Moran and DeLauro:

We respectfully request that you support **\$31.5 million for the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's (CDC) National Healthcare Safety Network (NHSN) and the Prevention Epicenters Program** in the FY 2014 Labor, Health and Human Services, Education and Related Agencies Appropriations Bill. These programs should be a priority, even in this climate of limited financial resources, because they are uniquely positioned to protect patients and the public from disease and death related to healthcare-associated infections (HAIs) and to detect the transmission of infections that are highly resistant to antibiotics.

HAIs are among the leading causes of preventable harm and death in the United States. CDC estimates that one in 20 hospitalized patients develops an HAI. In addition to the incalculable cost of patient suffering, these infections increase U.S. healthcare expenditures by more than \$30 billion each year because of complications, prolonged hospitalizations, and delayed recovery from the condition for which the patient was originally hospitalized. Our national HAI tracking system, NHSN, along with the Prevention Epicenters research program, are critical tools to address scientific gaps in HAI detection and prevention. NHSN helps us identify HAIs and understand the extent of the HAI problem, while the Prevention Epicenters conduct the research necessary to address scientific gaps regarding prevention of HAIs and help us better target solutions to protect patients from harm.

CDC's efforts to fight antimicrobial resistance are an essential part of our national strategy to protect patients from the threat of potentially untreatable infections. A recent issue of [CDC's Vital Signs](#) noted that infections due to carbapenem-resistant Enterobacteriaceae (CRE) bacteria that are resistant to nearly all available antibiotics are becoming more common. As reported by CDC Director Dr. Thomas Frieden, these "nightmare bacteria" kill up to one half of patients who get bloodstream infections from them and have now been reported in 42 states.

NHSN funding will allow CDC to target multidrug-resistant organisms and to measure antibiotic use, which is vital to improving outcomes for patients and reducing healthcare costs.

The high quality and scientifically sound data collected via NHSN are critical to measuring the true extent of the HAI problem. The research conducted by the Prevention Epicenters is

essential for developing novel, evidence-based prevention strategies. Fortunately, several HAIs are on the decline as a result of recent advances in the understanding of how to prevent infections. One example is the 41% reduction in central line-associated bloodstream infections over the past four years, which has resulted in 5,000 lives saved and an estimated \$83 million in healthcare costs averted.

We ask that you fund CDC to continue this important work by supporting \$31.5 million for the National Healthcare Safety Network (NHSN) and the Prevention Epicenters program. We thank you for the opportunity to make the case for these strategic programs that improve patient outcomes and reduce healthcare costs.

Sincerely,

Alliance for the Prudent Use of Antibiotics  
AMDA – Dedicated to Long Term Care Medicine  
Association for Professionals in Infection Control and Epidemiology (APIC)  
Association of American Medical Colleges  
Association of Public Health Laboratories (APHL)  
Association of periOperative Registered Nurses (AORN)  
Association of State and Territorial Health Officials (ASTHO)  
Connecticut Center for Patient Safety  
Council of State and Territorial Epidemiologists (CSTE)  
Federation of American Hospitals  
HAI Focus  
Harvard Pilgrim Health Care Institute  
Health Care Products Coalition  
Health Watch USA  
HONORreform Foundation  
Infectious Diseases Society of America (IDSA)  
Institute for Healthcare Improvement (IHI)  
National Association of Pediatric Nurse Practitioners  
National Association of County and City Health Officials (NACCHO)  
National Association of Directors of Nursing Administration in Long Term Care (NADONA)  
National Association of Public Hospitals and Health Systems (NAPH)  
Patient Advocacy of Connecticut  
Pediatric Infectious Diseases Society (PIDS)  
Premier healthcare alliance  
SAFE Care Campaign  
Society for Healthcare Epidemiology of America (SHEA)  
Society of Hospital Medicine  
The Clorox Company  
The Peggy Lillis Memorial Foundation  
Trust for America's Health (TFAH)