CONGRESS APPROVES LARGEST INCREASE TO DOMESTIC HIV/AIDS FUNDING IN DECADES

Appropriations Bill Allows the Ending the HIV Epidemic Initiative to Begin, Falls Short on Addressing Skyrocketing Hepatitis Cases

Washington, DC – Today, Congress approved the Labor/HHS appropriations bill that will fund government operations through the remainder of Fiscal Year 2020. This bill, which is expected to be signed into law by President Trump, makes one of the largest investments in domestic HIV/AIDS programs in decades. These programs will receive more than $300 million in increased funding, including start-up resources for the Ending the HIV Epidemic Initiative, and additional funds to core vital public health programs upon which people living with and at risk of HIV rely.

“This bill is historic,” said Rachel Klein, Deputy Executive Director of The AIDS Institute. “Over the last year, bipartisan policy makers at all levels of government, community members, and public health professionals have come together to begin planning a national campaign to end the HIV epidemic in the United States in the next 10 years. The funding in this bill is the first step in this endeavor, and we hope that in 2030 we will look back and see this year as the catalyst that ended HIV in the United States once and for all.”

Domestic HIV programs will receive more than $7 billion in funding for Fiscal Year 2020, which is $307 million more than previous fiscal years. The Ending the HIV Epidemic Initiative
was funded with additional funding of $140 million for the CDC’s Division of HIV Prevention to engage in targeted HIV prevention, an additional $70 million for the Ryan White HIV/AIDS Program to increase treatment for those newly diagnosed, and $50 million for Community Health Centers to increase access to PrEP across the nation. These increases are in addition to core funding for HIV prevention, treatment, and research programs that will receive full funding. NIH’s HIV/AIDS Research program will receive an additional $25 million to expand important HIV/AIDS research programs, and the Housing Opportunities for Persons with AIDS (HOPWA) program will receive an additional $17 million to ensure that all jurisdictions can continue to provide HOPWA services to their clients while also expanding services in areas that are impacted by the HIV epidemic. Finally, the bill increases funding for opioid related infectious diseases response at the CDC by $5 million.

“We thank Congressional leaders for their commitment to bettering the lives of people living with and at risk of HIV,” said Nick Armstrong, Policy Associate at The AIDS Institute and co-chair of the AIDS Budget and Appropriations Coalition. “In the coming years, we will work to ensure that these investments reach communities most impacted by HIV and raise up the voices of the people these programs serve to ensure that programs are as effective as they can be.”

Unfortunately, the CDC’s Division of Viral Hepatitis did not receive desperately needed increased funding despite increases in new hepatitis A, B, and C cases across the nation. The Division continues to only be funded at $39 million, despite continued calls for additional resources from communities battling the scourge of viral hepatitis. Hepatitis B is fully preventable, if people at risk receive a vaccine, and hepatitis C is curable, if those who have it are able to get tested and gain access to appropriate treatment.

“The United States is in the midst of a public health crisis. Viral hepatitis can be eliminated with the proper investment, yet we continue to see Congress inadequately fund these programs, despite widespread support for them among lawmakers and the White House,” said Frank Hood, Senior Policy Associate at The AIDS Institute. “Until states and health departments receive the funding they so desperately need, we will continue to see skyrocketing increases in the number of new cases of viral hepatitis year after year.”

###

The AIDS Institute is a national, nonpartisan, nonprofit organization that promotes action for social change through public policy, research, advocacy and education. For more information and to become involved, visit www.TheAIDSInstitute.org or write to us at Info@theaidsinstitute.org, and follow The AIDS Institute on Twitter @AIDSAvocacy and Facebook at www.facebook.com/The-AIDS-Institute.