



TFAH RELEASES “CRITICAL CARE” LIST OF TOP 10 PUBLIC HEALTH PRIORITIES: CUTS TO OBESITY, BIOTERRORISM, INFECTIOUS DISEASE PROGRAMS THREATEN THE NATION’S HEALTH

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WASHINGTON, April 6, 2005 – Trust for America’s Health (TFAH) today issued its annual “Critical Care” list of 10 top public health policy priorities that are essential to protecting America’s health and well-being. The list is in response to proposed cuts and shortfalls in the President’s Fiscal Year 2006 budget. Today’s release coincides with testimony of Dr. Julie Gerberding, Director of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) before the U.S. House Labor, Health and Human Services, Education and other Related Agencies Appropriations Subcommittee about Fiscal Year 2006 CDC appropriations.

“The Critical Care list focuses on programs identified as essential for protecting the health and safety of Americans,” said Shelley A. Hearne, DrPH, Executive Director of TFAH. “Trying to improve the nation’s fiscal health by cutting funds needed to better our physical health ends up costing us more in the long run both in health care costs and unnecessary pain and suffering.”

The Critical Care List of Top 10 Public Health Policy Priorities includes:

- **State and Local Public Health Bioterrorism Preparedness:** Increasing public health departments’ capabilities to respond to terrorism. Congress must restore the \$130 million in proposed cuts to state and local preparedness activities.
- **Global Disease Detection:** Speeding the identification, verification, and response to global disease outbreaks. TFAH recommends increasing funding for the program to \$45 million.
- **Biomonitoring for Infectious Diseases and Toxic Chemical Exposure:** Enhancing federal and state public health laboratory capabilities, including facilities, equipment, and workforce for better preparedness for disease outbreaks and chemical threats and terrorism. The recommended funding level for environmental health labs is \$47.5 million.
- **Battling the Obesity Epidemic:** Reducing the growing rates of obesity and designating CDC as the lead coordinating agency. This would require funding for CDC’s Division of Nutrition and Physical Activity (DNPA) at \$70 million; Division of Adolescent School Health (DASH) at \$76.8 million; Steps to a Healthier US (STEPS) at \$52 million; and Youth Media Campaign (VERB) at \$70 million.

- **Tracking Environmental Hazards and Chronic Disease:** Providing needed information to develop and evaluate actions to prevent and control chronic diseases that can be linked to environmental and occupational hazards. \$50 million should be allocated for Environmental and Health Outcome Tracking.
- **Enhancing Cancer Registries:** Improving the understanding to address growing cancer burden. TFAH recommends funding the National Program of Cancer Registries (NPCR) at \$65 million.
- **Preventing Birth Defects:** Bolstering data to help identify causes of birth defects and prevention strategies. Funding for Birth Defects Registries and Centers for Birth Defects Research and Prevention (CBDRP) should be at \$20 million.
- **Expanding Vaccine Protection:** Supporting the National Immunization Program with additional funds for child and adult operations grants and purchase of vaccines. TFAH recommends funding at \$748 million.
- **Eliminating Health Disparities:** Maintaining the Racial and Ethnic Approaches to Community Health (REACH) 2010 program designed to target six priority areas: cardiovascular disease, immunizations, breast and cervical cancer screening and management, diabetes, HIV/AIDS, and infant mortality. TFAH recommends funding REACH at \$45 million.
- **Improving Hazardous Substance Diagnosis and Response:** Educating health professionals on prevention measures and the health effects of toxic substances. The Agency for Toxic Substances and Disease Registry (ATSDR) should be funded at \$85 million.

The TFAH Critical Care list can be accessed on TFAH's Web site: www.healthyamericans.org

Trust for America's Health is a non-profit, non-partisan organization dedicated to saving lives by protecting the health of every community and working to make disease prevention a national priority.