

Protect and Invest in Public Health Initiatives, Research, and Health Workforce

Issue: Congress must protect our nation’s public health infrastructure, which supports investments that are vital to enhancing public health, research, and health workforce that improves our country’s health and well-being, including maintaining immunizations. Congress should also reject any funding cuts to the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) and use its oversight power to push back against the mass reductions in staff and reorganizations taking place that will negatively impact HHS’ ability to carry out its mission.

Why Action is Urgently Needed

Federal, state, and local public health programs work together to improve the health of our patients and communities, with many state and local initiatives relying on federal funding. Public health agencies and programs include:

- **Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality (AHRQ):** focused on health care quality, providing the evidence-based information needed by consumers, clinicians, health plans, purchasers, and policymakers to make informed health care decisions;
- **Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC):** develops the expertise, information, and tools needed to protect the nation’s public health—through health promotion, prevention of disease, injury and disability, and preparedness for new health threats;
- **Health Resources and Service Administration:** is the lead agency for furnishing access to health care for Americans that are uninsured, isolated, or medically vulnerable. HRSA administers many health workforce programs focused on growing the primary care physician workforce and reducing healthcare workforce shortages; and,
- **National Institutes of Health (NIH):** the nation’s medical research agency, supports research in every state and in more than 300 different disease and research categories.

Recent actions have weakened efforts to make Americans healthier and diminished our ability to implement evidence-based public health strategies. These include the cancellation of previously-awarded grants to state health departments to track the occurrence of infectious diseases; termination of medical and health services research grants and funding opportunities that would improve our understanding of how to prevent and treat disease; and support for health services research that improves care delivery. Additionally, five regional HHS offices are being closed and up to 20,000 full-time employee positions are being eliminated. These actions were taken without any consultation of key healthcare entities or experts, patient or clinician groups, or the U.S. Congress.

The preliminary FY 2026 HHS budget is [reported](#) to include cuts exceeding 30 percent. This includes a proposal to cut the NIH budget by \$20 billion.

ACP’s Position

ACP is [greatly concerned](#) about HHS staffing and funding cuts. Incidence rates of vaccine-preventable diseases, such as pertussis (whooping cough) and measles, are increasing. Now is the time to continue investment and strengthen our nation’s public health and research initiatives. Congress must sustain investment in these

programs in FY 2026 and protect their critical roles in promoting public health and conducting medical and health services research.

Call to Action

- Congress should utilize its oversight power to reject arbitrary cuts and rescissions, reorganization, and consolidation that degrades HHS and its ability to support research and deliver evidence-based public health services.
- Protect resources already appropriated and awarded and sustain funding for these public health programs in FY 2026, including: \$500 million for AHRQ, \$11.6 billion for the CDC, \$10.5 billion for HRSA, and \$51.3 billion for NIH.