The Need for Additional Funding to Achieve Viral Hepatitis Elimination

NVHR statement on President Biden's FY2023 budget proposal for viral hepatitis and related program funding.

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The National Viral Hepatitis Roundtable (NVHR), a national coalition working to eliminate viral hepatitis, today released the following statement from Director of Policy Daniel Raymond on President Biden's Fiscal Year 2023 budget proposal and subsequent funding levels for viral hepatitis and related programs:

"President Biden's FY 23 budget proposal is a milestone in recognizing of the need for additional funding to achieve viral hepatitis elimination. The budget request includes a $13.5 million increase for the CDC Division of Viral Hepatitis, a historic increase in year-over-year funding by percentage. In addition, the budget request calls for a new Vaccines for Adults (VFA) program and references harm reduction as a core element of the Biden-Harris Administration's drug strategy. Although the increased funding will help improve viral hepatitis testing and increase linkage to care, there remains a significant amount of work to be done to fully eliminate viral hepatitis in the United States.

"If the United States is going to eliminate viral hepatitis by 2030, a goal set out by the World Health Organization, it must appropriately fund programs that adequately address health disparities across racial and ethnic lines. The budget calls for mandatory funding for the Indian Health Service (IHS), with substantial annual funding increases, which will help American Indian and Alaska Natives (AI/AN) in accessing viral hepatitis prevention, care and treatment programs. The AI/AN community has faced significant disparities in the incidence rates of acute hepatitis C and hepatitis C-related mortality. This additional funding, including a request for $52 million to "End HIV and Hepatitis C in Indian Country", exemplifies the necessary actions the United States government must take to ensure better health outcomes for populations experiencing stark racial and ethnic health disparities.

"Recent data indicates that new hepatitis B and hepatitis C infections have increased in tandem with the overdose crisis, leading to a new generation at risk of future liver cancer, cirrhosis, and premature death. Meanwhile, vaccination against hepatitis B virus (HBV) continues to be underutilized for adults, and treatment initiation for hepatitis C overall decreased from 2014-2020. Without adequate funding to combat viral hepatitis through harm reduction and vaccination,

testing and linkage to care, and treatment, we risk lagging even further behind global goals.

“NVHR will continue to work with the Administration to identify and address the needs of the viral hepatitis community, which includes setbacks in viral hepatitis care caused by COVID-19, sound harm reduction policies, and a commitment to health equity for underserved communities. NVHR will also continue to work with Congress to secure the necessary funding to properly scale these programs.”

For more information about viral hepatitis and the need for a stronger public health response to rising hepatitis rates, please visit www.nvhr.org.

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