



October 25, 2019

The Honorable Richard Shelby
Chair
Committee on Appropriations
U.S. Senate

The Honorable Patrick Leahy
Vice Chair
Committee on Appropriations
U.S. Senate

The Honorable Nita Lowey
Chair
Committee on Appropriations
U.S. House of Representatives

The Honorable Kay Granger
Ranking Member
Committee on Appropriations
U.S. House of Representatives

Dear Chairmen Shelby, Chairwoman Lowey, Vice Chair Leahy, and Ranking Member Granger:

Thank you for your leadership on public health funding issues. The undersigned organizations representing the Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disease (COPD) Coalition, ask that you please include \$3 million in funding for the *Chronic Disease Education and Awareness* program within the National Center for Chronic Disease Prevention and Health Promotion at the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) as you work with your colleagues to finalize appropriations for Fiscal Year (FY) 2020.

Our recommendation is consistent with the allocation and committee instructions provided by the House FY 2020 Labor-Health and Human Services-Education (Labor-HHS) Appropriations Bill and corresponding committee report. This program represents an important and timely investment in public health. While COPD is a prototypical condition for support through this new mechanism considering the efforts called for by the *National COPD Action Plan*, it has the potential to improve health outcomes for a variety of chronic diseases and lower health costs in a meaningful way.

Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disease, or COPD, refers to a group of diseases that cause airflow blockage and breathing-related problems. It includes common conditions like emphysema and chronic bronchitis and more rare diseases like alpha-1 antitrypsin deficiency. Chronic lower respiratory disease, primarily COPD, is the 4th leading cause of death in the U.S.

Almost 15.7 million Americans (6.4%) reported they have been diagnosed with COPD, although the NIH estimates there are an additional 12-15 million Americans who have undiagnosed COPD. Unlike most chronic diseases in the U.S., COPD rates are increasing.

Investment in a CDC *Chronic Disease Education and Awareness* program as outlined in the House FY 2020 Labor-HHS measure is a common-sense and cost-effective approach to addressing the public health impacts of COPD and other chronic health conditions.

Thank you for your consideration of this request.

Sincerely,

Alpha-1 Foundation
American Association for Respiratory Care
American Lung Association
American Thoracic Society
COPD Foundation
Dorney-Koppel Foundation
Respiratory Health Association
US COPD Coalition