

April XX, 2019

The Honorable Roy Blunt
Chairman
Subcommittee on Labor, Health and Human
Services, Education, and Related Agencies
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Patty Murray
Ranking Member
Subcommittee on Labor, Health and Human
Services, Education, and Related Agencies
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Chairman Blunt and Ranking Member Murray:

As you begin consideration of the Fiscal Year (FY) 2020 Labor, Health and Human Services, Education, and Related Agencies (LHHS) Appropriations bill, we respectfully request that the Subcommittee build upon its longstanding support of congenital heart disease (CHD) research, surveillance, and awareness initiatives at the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) with a \$10 million appropriation to reflect the recent program reauthorization.

Congenital heart defects are the most common and deadliest birth defect. There are an estimated 2.4 million Americans living with CHD. Every 15 minutes a child is born with a heart defect, and 1 in 20 children with CHD will not see their first birthday. Early detection of CHD can be lifesaving, and significant strides in screening and treatment have been made—90 percent of youth with CHD live into adulthood. However, even for those who receive an early diagnosis and successful surgery, there is no cure. Children, adolescents, and adults living with CHD require lifelong, specialized cardiac care and face increased risk of disability, co-morbidities, and premature death. Hospitalizations for CHD total \$6.1 billion annually.

Investments in CDC's work have helped to improve understanding and care of CHD in newborns. These activities have led to improved screening rates and identified certain lifestyle and health conditions before pregnancy that have been linked to a higher risk of giving birth to a child with CHD. Coupled with investments at the National Institutes of Health on improved newborn interventions, CHD patients are surviving and living longer. To reflect this growing population of adolescents and adults living with CHD, Congress recently passed the Congenital Heart Futures Reauthorization Act (P.L. 115-132). This new law preserves CDC's core activities, while expanding the program to collect longitudinal data on CHD survivors across the lifespan through a national cohort study, and to conduct awareness and outreach activities.

We are requesting full-funding at the newly authorized level of \$10 million for FY 2020 to support CDC in building the knowledge base to address the lifelong needs of the growing CHD population and educating patients to help improve health outcomes and reduce medical costs. Thank you for your continued commitments to programs that improve our nation's public health and outcomes for many diseases and disorders, including congenital heart disease.

Sincerely,

Richard J. Durbin
United States Senator

Todd Young
United States Senator