

HIV+HEP

POLICY INSTITUTE

PRESS RELEASE

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Biden Budget Proposes Increased Funding for Ending HIV *But No Increases Slated for Hepatitis Programs*

Washington DC... As the world [marks the 40th anniversary](#) of the CDC's first reporting on what we now know to be AIDS, President Joe Biden is proposing in his [budget released today](#) to continue to ramp up efforts to finally end HIV in the United States. In addition to the increase of \$267 million for domestic HIV testing, prevention, and treatment programs as part of the [Ending the HIV Epidemic initiative](#), which was announced as part of the [preliminary budget](#), Biden is proposing a \$46 million increase to the Ryan White HIV/AIDS Programs and \$20 million for HUD's Housing Opportunities for Persons with AIDS (HOPWA) program.

Despite issuing a [proclamation](#) just a couple of days ago which repeated the national commitment to end hepatitis by 2030 and mentioned the Viral Hepatitis National Strategic Plan that provides a roadmap to elimination, Biden's budget proposes to keep CDC's hepatitis division at only \$39.5 million.

"We thank President Biden for demonstrating his commitment to ending HIV in the United States with this funding increase to ramp up the [Ending the HIV Epidemic initiative](#)," commented **Carl Schmid, executive director** of the **HIV+Hepatitis Policy Institute**. "While it falls short of what is needed and the community has [requested](#), if this funding is realized it will continue the momentum already created and make further progress in ending HIV in the U.S. Efforts to end HIV will help eradicate an infectious disease that we have been battling for the last 40 years and help correct racial and health inequities in our nation."

Biden's HIV budget request builds on the over \$400 million Congress appropriated for the first two years of the initiative to end HIV by 2030 by initially focusing on scaling up programs in jurisdictions most impacted by HIV. Last year, President Trump's budget called for an increase of \$412 million for the second year of the initiative for a total of \$716 million. Total funding for the initiative would be \$670 million in year three if the Biden budget request is approved.

Just yesterday, the CDC released [new encouraging data](#) that shows we are going in the right direction towards ending HIV. The use of PrEP is up substantially, along with the percent of

people living with HIV who are virally suppressed. This in turn has lowered the number of new infections by 8 percent between 2015 and 2019.

Despite battling the COVID epidemic, we have already witnessed promising results of the *Ending the HIV Epidemic* initiative. The Ryan White HIV/AIDS Program reports they were able to bring nearly 6,300 new clients into the program and re-engage an additional 3,600. Community health centers were able to increase pre-exposure prophylaxis (PrEP), a once-daily pill that prevents HIV transmission, uptake from 19,000 in 2020 to nearly 63,000 people this year.

For *Ending the HIV Epidemic* programs, Biden's budget includes a \$100 million increase for CDC's HIV prevention efforts; \$85 million more for the Ryan White HIV/AIDS Program; and \$50 million more for the Community Health Centers to focus on PrEP. Additionally, the budget proposed \$22 million more for HIV and hepatitis C prevention activities under the Indian Health Service and an increase of HIV research at the NIH by \$10 million.

Biden's budget proposes an increase of \$.6 million for the Minority AIDS Initiative at HHS.

Biden's budget request for hepatitis falls well short of the community's request of \$134 million for the CDC Hepatitis Division. Recently, the CDC [reported](#) that the number of acute hepatitis C cases increased 70 percent from 2015 through 2019. Elimination of hepatitis can be made possible through scaling up curative medications for hepatitis C and vaccines for hepatitis A and B.

"If we are to implement the [national strategic plan](#) to eliminate hepatitis and do it by 2030, as the president supports, we are going to need a significant commitment of resources and the leadership to make it happen," continued Schmid. "Unfortunately, that is not going to happen with this budget proposal."

Hepatitis funding increases are needed to carry out surveillance, screening, education, linkage to care, and outbreak response programs throughout the country, particularly as a result of the ongoing opioid crisis.

Biden's budget does call for a minor increase of \$6.5 million for the CDC's Eliminating Opioid Related Infectious Diseases program and the removal of the federal funding ban on the purchase of sterile syringes. These steps will be beneficial to preventing new cases of both HIV and hepatitis.

HIV+Hep looks to the Congress to realize the proposed increases for HIV and for a deeper commitment to hepatitis programs so that progress can be made to end these infectious diseases.

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The **HIV+Hepatitis Policy Institute** is a national, non-profit organization whose mission is to promote quality and affordable healthcare for people living with or at risk of HIV, hepatitis, and other serious and chronic health conditions.

HIV + HEPATITIS POLICY INSTITUTE

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