

# **HIV+HEP**

## POLICY INSTITUTE

### PRESS RELEASE

March 9, 2022

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## **Congressional Funding Slows for Ending HIV Initiative** *Hepatitis Programs Left with a Minimal Increase*

Washington DC... In the [omnibus appropriations bill](#) released today, Congress has significantly slowed the increase of funding for the [Ending the HIV Epidemic in the U.S. initiative](#) and put in jeopardy efforts to end HIV by 2030. Instead of supporting an increase of \$245 million, as was proposed in President Biden's [budget](#) and passed by the House and proposed by Senate Democratic leaders, the final bill allocates an increase of only \$70 million for HIV testing, prevention, treatment, and research programs for those jurisdictions most impacted by HIV.

“After having to deal with COVID-19 these past two years, we were looking forward for our nation’s HIV prevention, care, and treatment programs getting back on track in ramping up their efforts to end HIV. Unfortunately, the smaller than expected increases for the second year in a row will severely hamper these efforts and endanger our nation’s goal to end HIV by 2030,” commented **Carl Schmid, executive director** of the **HIV+Hepatitis Policy Institute**. “We are especially disappointed that efforts to dramatically expand PrEP access to prevent HIV will not be able occur in the coming year,” continued Schmid.

The final bill includes almost \$175 million in increases for other domestic HIV programs, with more than half of them dedicated to AIDS research at the NIH, and only a \$1.5 million increase to combat viral hepatitis.

For the *Ending the HIV Epidemic in the U.S.* initiative, Congress approved a \$20 million increase for the CDC’s HIV prevention efforts (rather than +\$100 million proposed by the president and passed by the House and proposed by Senate Democratic leadership), \$20 million more for the Ryan White HIV/AIDS Program (rather than +\$85 million), \$20 million more for the Community Health Centers to expand access to PrEP (rather than +\$50 million), and \$10 million for NIH AIDS Research (which was proposed by the president). Additionally, HIV and hepatitis prevention activities for the Indian Health Service are flat funded at \$5 million (rather than \$27 million as proposed by the president). All total, the *Ending the HIV Epidemic in the U.S.* initiative will now be funded at about \$450 million, far less than the proposed total nearing \$700 million.

After years of flat funding, the bill includes a \$51 million increase for ongoing efforts in the Ryan White HIV/AIDS Program, which is \$5 million more than what was requested in

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President Biden's budget, but \$95 million less than the House passed bill. For HUD's Housing Opportunities for Persons with AIDS (HOPWA) program, the Congress approved an increase of \$20 million, the same amount requested by President Biden but far less the \$170 million increase passed by the House. Funding for AIDS research at the NIH would increase by \$104 million.

In a major disappointment, the bill includes only an increase of \$1.5 million for CDC's hepatitis division for a total of \$41 million. The House version of the bill called for an increase of \$5 million. In another significant setback the ban on federal funding on the purchase of sterile syringes is continued despite our nation's ongoing injection drug use epidemic and the administration's commitment to harm reduction programs. The bill includes an increase of \$5 million for the CDC's Eliminating Opioid Related Infectious Diseases program, which will be beneficial to preventing new cases of both HIV and hepatitis.

The funding level for hepatitis falls well short of the community's request of \$134 million for the CDC Hepatitis Division. "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 be possible with this consistently low level of funding."

The bill also includes a \$1.5 million increase for the Minority AIDS Initiative, while funding for SAMHSA's Minority AIDS programs remains the same. Funding continues for abstinence-only programs, and there would be no increases to Title X family planning programs and the Teen Pregnancy Prevention Program.

While extremely disappointed, **HIV+Hep** next looks forward to the release of President Biden's FY2023 budget request to Congress. "It is our hope the president will follow through on his commitment to end both HIV and hepatitis and devote considerable resources to both these efforts and that Congress will support them," continued Schmid. "Specifically, we hope he and the Congress will support the [request](#) made by 111 HIV and LGBTQ groups to fund a \$400 million national PrEP grant program that will help more people access PrEP, particularly for Blacks and Latinos where uptake has been low."

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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.