

## **President's FY 2011 Budget Falls Far Short on Infectious Diseases Programs**

### *IDSA Statement on the Obama Administration's Budget Proposal*

The Infectious Diseases Society of America (IDSA) is disappointed that President Obama's fiscal year (FY) 2011 budget fails to strengthen key U.S. public health and research initiatives. Warning that the nation's ability to prevent, diagnose, and treat an ever-increasing number of infectious diseases threats will be severely diminished should the President's budget go into effect, the Society calls upon Congress to reshape the President's proposal and craft a budget that instead bolsters funding for U.S. and global infectious diseases research and public health activities through the nation's leading federal health agencies.

IDSA represents more than 9,000 infectious diseases physicians and scientists devoted to patient care, education, research, prevention, and public health. The Society's members care for patients of all ages with serious infections, including antibiotic-resistant bacterial infections such as methicillin-resistant *Staphylococcus aureus* (MRSA) and tuberculosis as well as a growing number of drug-resistant gram negative bacterial infections; meningitis; those with cancer or transplants who have life-threatening infections caused by unusual microorganisms; HIV/AIDS; as well as emerging infections such as pandemic influenza and severe acute respiratory syndrome (SARS).

As the recent outbreak of the 2009 H1N1 influenza virus has shown, federal agencies such as the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) are our nation's first line of defense against infectious diseases. Unfortunately, the President's proposal does little to move the nation forward in its battle to reduce the toll of many preventable and treatable infectious diseases that claim a disproportionate share of lives around the world.

Especially hard-hit in this year's budget is CDC, the primary federal agency responsible for supporting public health protection through health promotion, prevention, preparedness, and research. CDC would see a cut of more than \$135 million dollars in its total budget. Of particular concern to IDSA is the slashing of the Infectious Diseases program budget, which would be reduced by almost \$100 million—a 5 percent decline.

Under CDC's proposed budget, the agency's already severely strapped Antimicrobial Resistance budget would be cut dramatically by \$8.6 million—roughly 50 percent. This vital program is necessary to help combat the rising crisis of drug resistance, a critical medical problem that the agency deems "one of the world's most pressing public health problems." Yet the President's FY 2011 budget would allow CDC to target only 20 state/local health departments and health care systems to be funded for surveillance, prevention, and control of antimicrobial resistance, down from 48 this past year. It would also eliminate all grants to states for the successful Get Smart in the Community program to combat improper uses of antibiotics.

IDSA also is troubled by the reduction in CDC's Section 317 immunization program funding. Immunization has been one of the most cost-effective public health interventions, saving lives plus millions of dollars in unnecessary medical spending. In part through the Section 317 program, the United States has made significant progress toward eliminating vaccine-preventable diseases among children. However, with the conclusion of additional 317 support provided through the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act, the program will lose nearly 21 percent in vaccine purchase grants and state infrastructure grants in the next fiscal year. At a time when new vaccines are available and a greater commitment to immunizations for both children and adults is necessary, the cuts to this program will reduce the total number of persons with access to immunizations.

While infectious diseases research at the National Institutes of Health (NIH) would grow by \$150 million in FY2011 under the proposed budget, this increase represents just over 3 percent above current funding levels. With biomedical research inflation going up at a rate of about 3.6 percent per year, this budget will actually result in fewer grants awarded and fewer new research projects, at a time when the need for this research is so critical.

Given the events associated with the influenza outbreak of the past year, it is distressing that the President's budget would call for a cut of nearly \$300 million in pandemic influenza preparedness and response funding at HHS. Thankfully, supplemental funding passed by Congress last year will continue to allow for purchases of influenza vaccines and for additional antivirals to restock the Strategic National Stockpile. It is not a question of whether another pandemic will happen, it is only a question of when one will occur.

Finally, the \$476 million proposed for the Biomedical Advanced Research and Development Authority (BARDA), established to support the development of countermeasures, is grossly insufficient and will fail to achieve Congress' stated goal to protect this country against bioterrorism and emerging infections. While we are grateful that the President has identified BARDA as a priority and recommended an increase in its funding, this agency has been severely underfunded since its inception. IDSA and others have testified that \$1.7 billion is needed in the upcoming fiscal year for BARDA to fund research and development of therapeutics, including against drug-resistant bacterial infections, diagnostics, vaccines, and other technologies. Such funding would help ensure the availability of resources throughout the advanced stages of development and give needed flexibility for BARDA to partner effectively with industry.

Given these serious concerns, IDSA urges Congress to develop a budget that will invest wisely in the prevention, diagnosis, and treatment of life-threatening infectious diseases.

*For a statement on proposed domestic HIV/AIDS spending, please see the HIV Medical Association's website (<http://www.hivma.org/Content.aspx?id=16116>). For a statement on proposed funding for global HIV and tuberculosis programs, please see the Global Center for Health Policy's website (<http://www.idsaglobalhealth.org/GlobalHealthContent.aspx?id=16114>)*