

March of Dimes

First Quarter
2004



Advocacy Update

from the Office of Government Affairs

March of Dimes Federal Funding Priorities

FY04 Federal Appropriations Priorities

Almost three months after the beginning of the fiscal year, Congress approved the FY 2004 Consolidated Appropriations bill on January 22 and the President signed the bill into law the following day. This legislation includes funding for the Department of Health and Human Services and related agencies. Of particular importance to the March of Dimes is the 15% increase in funding for the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's National Center on Birth Defects and Developmental Disabilities and a 3.1% increase for the National In-

stitutes of Health's National Institute of Child Health and Human Development (NICHD). Also important is the \$2 million to the Health Resources and Services Administration to help states improve newborn screening programs.

FY05 Administration Budget Proposal

On February 2, President Bush presented his FY 2005 budget proposal to Congress.

The President's budget includes a proposed 3.9% increase in discretionary spending overall, but in

Continued on page 2

Chapters Use Public Affairs to Raise Funds for Foundation

Chapters tell us that volunteer and donor interest in March of Dimes specialty license plates is growing across the country. Some states dedicate income from the sale of license plates to the support of government programs, whereas in other states, proceeds from the sale of license plates can be earmarked for non-profit organizations such as the March of Dimes. In most states, specialty plates will be produced only if it can be demonstrated that

Continued on page 2



Inside

- March of Dimes Federal Funding Priorities Chart (page 2)
- News You Can Use (page 3)
- Surgeon General Speaks on Prematurity (page 3)
- Chapter Recipients of Public Affairs Grants (page 3)
- Nation Reaffirms Commitment to Preventing Birth Defects (page 4)

Federal Funding Continued from page 1

creases to non-defense and non-homeland security accounts would be limited to less than one percent. Funding levels for most agencies and programs of interest to the March of Dimes were spared from significant cuts in the blueprint; however, NICHD would receive a small increase and most other major accounts would be level funded in FY05.

Program	In Millions of Dollars		
	FY 2004 Funding	President's FY 2005 Budget Proposal	March of Dimes Proposal for FY 2005
National Institutes of Health (Total)	27,878	28,607	30,666
National Institute of Child Health and Human Development	1,242	1,281	1,366
National Human Genome Research Institute	479	493	527
National Center on Minority Health and Disparities	192	197	211
Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (Total)	6,972	6,859	8,100
Center on Birth Defects and Developmental Disabilities	113	113	160
Regional Centers for Birth Defects Research & Prevention	7.3	NA	17.3
Folic Acid Education Campaign	2.5	NA	5
Immunization	643	644	NA
Polio Eradication	106.4	NA	106.4
Center for Health Statistics	128	150	181
Health Resources and Services Administration (Total)	6,600	6,029	8,000
Maternal and Child Health Block Grant	730	730	800
Newborn Screening (Title 26 of Children's Health Act)	2	NA	25
Newborn Hearing Sreening	10	0	10
Consolidated (Community) Health Centers	1,617	1,836	1,867
Healthy Start	98	98	98
Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality	304	304	390

Fund Raising Continued from page 1

demand for the plates is significant and that revenue generated by their sale will be sufficient to more than offset the cost of production.

Advocating for the creation of a specialty license plate that earmarks money to the March of Dimes is a creative way to fundraise and build mission awareness. Before a Chapter undertakes a license plate project, however, there are two critical questions to consider. Is the Chapter able to commit the volunteer and staff time to promote or market the license plate if the initiative is approved? Will the Chapter be able to sustain level

of interest in the plates over time?

Texas' recent experience with a license plate initiative is instructive. Last year, the Texas State Public



Affairs Committee advocated successfully for the creation of a March of Dimes specialty plate, the proceeds from which will be used to support the state Birth Defects Reg-

istry. To ensure widespread demand for the license plate, Chapter volunteers wrote letters to editors of newspapers across the state promoting the specialty plate and explaining that the revenue generated from its sale would be used to support research and programs to prevent birth defects. The Chapter is also using its web site to drive sales of the license plate.

A March of Dimes specialty license plate is a creative way to advance the mission, raise program visibility and generate funds needed for research and services.

IOM Report on the Uninsured

Calling attention to the roughly 18,000 unnecessary deaths every year in the U.S. due to the lack of health insurance, the Institute of Medicine (IOM) of the National Academies released a report, *Insuring America's Health: Principles and Recommendations*, designed to help decision makers judge and compare proposals to extend coverage to the uninsured. This is the sixth and final report in a series on the uninsured issued by the IOM. (The series of reports can be found on the IOM's web site at www.iom.edu/project.asp?id=4660) An earlier report in the series cited March of Dimes sponsored research on the effects of uninsurance

on pregnant women.

In its latest report, the IOM recommends principles for guiding the debate and evaluation of strategies to cover the uninsured; however, the IOM does not recommend a specific coverage strategy. The guiding principles recommended in this report are:

- Health care coverage should be universal.
- Health care coverage should be continuous.
- Health care coverage should be affordable to individuals and families.

- The health insurance strategy should be affordable and sustainable for society.
- Health insurance should enhance health and well-being by promoting access to high-quality care that is effective, efficient, safe, timely, patient-centered, and equitable.

The full report is located on the IOM's web site at www.iom.edu/report.asp?id=17632.

Surgeon General Speaks on Prematurity

On February 10, Surgeon General Richard H. Carmona opened a week-long dialogue on prematurity and the importance of health literacy in sustaining healthy pregnancy and childbirth at a speech before the National Library of Medicine Board of Directors. The Surgeon General stated that health literacy is especially important during pre-pregnancy and pregnancy. "There are many things that pregnant women and women who are intending to become pregnant need to consider in order to provide the best chance for a healthy baby," Dr. Carmona said. In his speech the



Surgeon General referred to the March of Dimes as moving science forward to elucidate the causes of preterm labor and birth defects. His hopes are that the next nationwide health literacy campaign will educate the public about prevention of preterm labor.

On Monday, February 16, the Surgeon General appeared live on Discovery Health's television broadcast *Birth Day Live!* Discovery Health is a national sponsor of WalkAmerica and the show featured March of Dimes volunteers and PSAs throughout the broadcast.

Chapter Recipients of Public Affairs Grants

Thirty Chapters were awarded 2004 Public Affairs grants. These funds are used to help support state consultants who work with the Chapters and OGA to advance the Foundation's advocacy priorities. Chapters receiving 2004 grants are:

Northern Region

CT, IL, IN, MA, MI, MN
NJ, NY, PA, RI, VT, WI

Southern Region

AL, DC, FL, GA, KY, MO,
MS, NC, SC, TN, VA

Western Region

AZ, CA, CO, ID, KS
OK, TX

Nation Reaffirms Commitment to Preventing Birth Defects

On December 3, 2003 President Bush signed the “Birth Defects and Developmental Disabilities Prevention Act” (S. 286) into law.

S. 286 reauthorizes the activities of CDC’s National Center on Birth Defects and Developmental Disabilities which funds data collection and research projects related to the prevention of birth defects and developmental disabilities.

“It is through the work of state based programs authorized by this legislation that data concerning the incidence and trends associated with birth defects is obtained. This information is critical to

identification of areas where further research is needed,” said Dr. Jennifer L. Howse, president of the March of Dimes. She added, “A particularly important feature of this bill is the work of the regional Centers for Birth Defects Research and Prevention. Under the auspices of the NCBDDDD, these centers are participating in the National Birth Defect Prevention Study, the largest case-control study of birth defects ever conducted.” The regional centers are located in Arkansas, California, Georgia, Iowa, Massachusetts, New Jersey, New York, North Carolina, Texas, and Utah.

The *Advocacy Update* delivers legislative news about March of Dimes issues on a quarterly basis.

Editor:
Christina F. Manero

If you have questions or comments about the *Advocacy Update*, contact:

**March of Dimes
Birth Defects Foundation
Office of Government Affairs
1146 19th Street, N.W.
6th Floor
Washington, D.C. 20036
Telephone: (202) 659-1800
Fax: (202) 296-2964**

copyright © March of Dimes
First Quarter 2004



Office of Government Affairs
1146 19th Street, N.W., 6th Floor
Washington, D.C. 20036