



National Health Council

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July 26, 2010

Honorable Tom Harkin
Chairman
Subcommittee on Labor-HHS-Education
Committee on Appropriations
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

Honorable Thad Cochran
Ranking Member
Subcommittee on Labor-HHS-Education
Committee on Appropriations
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Chairman Harkin and Ranking Member Cochran:

On behalf of 133 million Americans living with chronic conditions and their family caregivers, the National Health Council (NHC) urges you to include **at least \$50 million for the Cures Acceleration Network (CAN)** in the FY 2011 Labor, HHS, and Education appropriations bill.

The NHC is the only organization of its kind that brings together all segments of the health care community to provide a united voice for the more than 133 million people with chronic diseases and disabilities and their family caregivers. Made up of more than 100 national health-related organizations and businesses, its core membership includes approximately 50 of the nation's leading patient advocacy groups, which control its governance. Other members include professional societies and membership associations, nonprofit organizations with an interest in health, and major pharmaceutical, medical device, biotechnology, and insurance companies.

Despite increased funding for biomedical research in recent years, the number of approved new therapeutics remains low. For many people with chronic diseases and disabilities, there are few, if any, effective treatments or cures. CAN was developed to facilitate development and approval of much needed innovative treatments. If funded, the Director of the National Institutes of Health will be authorized to award grants and contracts to public or private entities engaged in innovative research to assist them in bringing resulting therapies to patients.

By statute, CAN cannot be implemented unless it has a direct appropriation of funds. Initial funding for CAN is crucial to jumpstart the network and ensure its lasting viability. **The NHC applauds the Senate's inclusion of CAN in the health care reform legislation and urges you to continue your support for the program by funding it with at least \$50 million for FY 2011.**

Please do not hesitate to contact Kevin Cain, our Assistant Vice President of Government Affairs, if you or your staff would like to discuss these issues in greater detail. He can be reached by phone at 202-973-0542 or via e-mail at kcaain@nhcouncil.org. You may also reach me on my direct, private line at 202-973-0546 or via e-mail at mweinberg@nhcouncil.org.

Sincerely,

Myrl Weinberg, CAE
President