



NATIONAL HEALTH COUNCIL

**Prepared written testimony for Kimberly Beer  
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U.S. House of Representatives, Committee on Appropriations  
Subcommittee on Labor, Health and Human Services, and Education  
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Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony in support of Fiscal Year 2026 appropriations that place patients' needs at the forefront of this subcommittee's priorities. We urge Members to prioritize funding for federal agencies and key health programs that directly impact patients and are essential to maintaining a strong and resilient health care infrastructure. Robust federal investment is critical to protecting the health and well-being of all Americans—especially individuals living with chronic illnesses and disabilities.

Created by and for patient organizations more than 100 years ago, the National Health Council (NHC) brings diverse organizations together to forge consensus and drive patient-centered health policy. We promote increased access to affordable, high-value, sustainable, equitable health care. Made up of more than 180 national health-related organizations and businesses, the NHC's core membership includes the nation's leading patient organizations. Other members include health-related associations and nonprofit organizations including the provider, research, and family caregiver communities; and businesses representing biopharmaceutical, device, diagnostic, generic drug, and payer organizations.

The NHC is focused on advancing issues on behalf of our members in these key areas: improving access and affordability, expanding research and innovation, and ensuring nonprofit sustainability. Nonprofit patient organizations have long served as trusted and effective partners in supporting patients, conducting research, and educating the public, health care providers, and patients on important public health issues.

We urge the subcommittee to provide adequate funding for programs that:

1. Invest in research to advance understanding, treatment, and eventual cures for chronic diseases and disabilities. Robust, sustained research funding drives scientific breakthroughs that improve lives and reduce long-term health care costs.
2. Expand access to essential health care providers, services, and treatments. Timely and affordable access to care is critical to improving outcomes and quality of life for individuals with chronic conditions and disabilities.
3. Support programs that help patients navigate and obtain affordable health care coverage. Coverage is only meaningful if patients can afford, understand, access, and effectively use it to get the care they need.

4. Provide services and support for people with chronic conditions and disabilities that are not provided—or adequately supported—by the private sector. Public funding fills critical gaps that private markets often overlook, including long-term services, caregiver support, and community-based programs.
5. Strengthen prevention and wellness initiatives to reduce the burden of chronic diseases and disabilities. Preventive care and early intervention not only improve health outcomes but also help reduce strain on the broader health care system.

At a time when public health care challenges are growing more complex, the NHC is concerned that efforts to reduce the role of the federal government and restructure of essential health agencies may undermine their ability to effectively address pressing health matters. We need to assure a robust federal infrastructure to respond to emerging health crises and support ongoing health priorities and programs, which are vital to the well-being of the American people.

Thank you for your consideration of the NHC's recommendations as you finalize funding priorities for Fiscal Year 2026. Please contact Kimberly Beer, Senior Vice President, Policy & External Affairs at [kbeer@nhcouncil.org](mailto:kbeer@nhcouncil.org) or 202-557-9146 with any questions or request for additional information.