



March 29, 2012

The Honorable Tom Harkin
Chairman
Senate Appropriations Subcommittee
on Labor, HHS and Education
131 Dirksen Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Richard Shelby
Ranking Member
Senate Appropriations Subcommittee
on Labor, HHS and Education
131 Dirksen Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Denny Rehberg
Chairman
House Appropriations Subcommittee
on Labor, HHS and Education
2358 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Rosa DeLauro
Ranking Member
House Appropriations Subcommittee
on Labor, HHS and Education
2358 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairmen Harkin and Rehberg and Ranking Members Shelby and DeLauro:

As members of organizations that represent public health professionals, infection preventionists, epidemiologists, infectious disease physicians, and a hospital improvement alliance, we strongly urge you to support **\$27.5 million to fund the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's (CDC's) National Healthcare Safety Network (NHSN) for fiscal year 2013** as requested in the President's budget.

These funds are critically needed to continue to provide for high-quality tracking and monitoring of deadly healthcare-associated infections (HAIs).

HAIs have an enormous impact on our society as **one out of every 20 hospitalized patients in the nation contracts an HAI**. The most recent official estimate indicated that **1.7 million patients in U.S. hospitals were infected with an HAI in a single year**, accounting for nearly **99,000 deaths**.

Collection of accurate, timely, and complete data is necessary to measure the true extent of the problem, develop evidence-based HAI prevention strategies and monitor their effectiveness. Such data are critical to understanding patterns of HAI prevalence, which help public health and healthcare practitioners better coordinate prevention efforts, and measuring reduction in HAIs. In addition, consistent, high quality, scientifically sound and validated data are necessary to be reported at the state and federal level to ensure that accurate information is reported to the public, allowing for fair comparisons between facilities.

Since NHSN is the only system with this capability, the majority of states have adopted the NHSN for legislatively mandated public reporting and most inpatient facilities reimbursed by Medicare are required to report specified HAIs via NHSN. Data from other care settings and additional infection types are being phased in. Thus, the number of facilities, types of facilities, and number of infection indicators are growing exponentially.

Despite the system's importance in our nation's efforts to monitor and prevent HAIs, funding for NHSN has been flat since FY 2010. Without additional funding, increasing the number of facilities reporting into NHSN from 3,000 in 2010 to an expected 16,500 in 2013 will exceed the capacity of the system.

Adequate funding for NHSN will allow CDC to modernize the NHSN information technology platform in order to enhance electronic data collection, reduce the burden of data collection and allow facilities, states, and federal agencies to focus on infection prevention and control. The NHSN serves as the foundation for prevention and the development of innovative, evidence-based HAI prevention strategies. Federal resources are required to ensure that accurate data are reported to NHSN and become available to the public.

In addition, enhanced funding for NHSN will allow for further investment in the EpiCenters -- five academic centers which conduct infection control and prevention research including projects on healthcare-associated infections and antibiotic-resistant infections. The EpiCenters have survived on a \$2 million budget over the past 15 years with no increase.

In closing, we ask that you support a funding level of **\$27.5 million in FY 2013** for NHSN to allow the CDC, states and other federal agencies to use this tool to carry out their mission to ensure the public's health, assure and improve the quality of care, and enhance patient safety.

Sincerely,



Michelle Farber, RN, CIC
APIC President



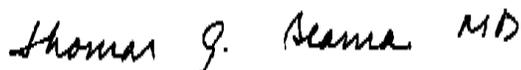
Jan Patterson, MD, MS
SHEA President



Tom Safranek, MD
President, CSTE
State Epidemiologist, Nebraska Department
of Health and Human Services



Blair Childs, Sr. Vice President
Government Affairs
Premier healthcare alliance



Thomas G. Slama, MD, FIDSA
President, IDSA