

Fiscal Year 2012 Labor, Health and Human Services, and Education, and Related Agencies Appropriations Bill

U.S. Senate Committee on Appropriations

Press Release and

Bill: <http://www.appropriations.senate.gov/news.cfm?method=news.view&id=7f6ba191-8901-402e-86b2-27cd220d14d1>

Here is a summary of appropriation items related to Down syndrome.

Research

Accelerating Cures

The bill creates the National Center for Advancing Translational Sciences (NCATS) as part of a broader restructuring at NIH that also includes the termination of the National Center for Research Resources. The mission of NCATS is to transform the way NIH pursues the translation of basic science into treatments and cures. Too often, basic biomedical research will suggest a promising path for a treatment or cure, but funding falls short to pursue the idea to its fullest potential. A new program within NCATS--the Cures Acceleration Network (CAN)--will help speed the translation and application of discoveries that have shown signs of success at the laboratory level but have not advanced far enough to attract significant investments from the private sector. CAN, for which the bill provides \$20,000,000, will make grants to biotech companies, universities, and **patient advocacy groups**, and will also help facilitate FDA review for the high-need cures that are funded by this initiative.

National Institutes of Health

The bill provides \$30.5 billion, a decrease of \$190 million, to **fund biomedical research** at the 27 Institutes and Centers that comprise the NIH.

This is where research lobbying comes into play. We need to make sure DS research is getting an equitable cut of this, even though total funding was decreased. The NIH DS plan that was published back in 2008, while great, was never funded.

Education

Education for Individuals With Disabilities

The bill provides nearly \$11.5 billion, the **same amount as the fiscal year 2011** level, under section 611 of part B grants to States for educating students with disabilities.

Promoting School Readiness for Minors in SSI

The bill includes \$4 million within the Department of Education and \$10 million at the SSA for a new Promoting School Readiness for Minors in SSI (PROMISE) program. PROMISE will bring together these agencies with the Departments of HHS and Labor in an unprecedented interagency

effort to improve outcomes for children, and the families of children, receiving Supplemental Security Income benefits. Almost 60 percent of child SSI recipients who turn 18, and become ineligible for child benefits, immediately continue receiving benefits as an adult. Those who do enter the workforce have average earnings that are only one-third the level as their peers. This program will improve services for these transition-aged youth by encouraging State-level innovation and facilitating better coordination between existing programs serving disabled youth. To the extent that this initiative can help young people with disabilities eventually support themselves, it will also reduce SSI program costs.

This sounds related to the TEAM Act - HR 602,603,604

Head Start

Investments in early childhood education not only improve outcomes for low-income children and families, but save taxpayer dollars in the long-run through lower Federal and State welfare, special education, and criminal justice costs. The bill includes a \$340 million increase for Head Start, maintaining the recent expansion of 61,000 Head Start slots funded with Recovery Act funding in fiscal years 2009 and 2010. In total, Head Start will provide comprehensive early childhood services to 968,000 low-income children and families.

FYI - 10% of Head Start slots are set aside for children with special needs, regardless of income.

Striving Readers

The bill includes \$183 million for this comprehensive, competitive literacy program. Funds will be used by States to implement their statewide literacy plans, which address activities from birth through 12th grade and will support programs that advance literacy skills through professional development, screening and assessment, targeted interventions for students reading below grade level and other research-based methods of improving classroom instruction and practice.

Health Care

Health Care Program Integrity

Fraud committed against Federal healthcare programs puts Americans at increased risk and diverts critical resources from providing necessary health services to some of the Nation's most vulnerable populations. The bill includes \$581 million for Health Care Fraud and Abuse Control activities at the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services. This amount is a \$270.6 million increase over the fiscal year 2011 level of \$310.4 million. The historical return on investment for the life of the Medicare Integrity program has been about \$14 for every \$1 spent. For fraud and abuse activities throughout Medicare and Medicaid, the Federal Government saves or recovers \$6 for every \$1 spent.

Combating fraud in Medicaid is critical to ensuring that qualified recipients are not losing benefits due to fraud and abuse by others.