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Congress of the United States

House of Representatives

Washington, DC 20515-1402

April 6, 2022

The Honorable Xavier Becerra
Secretary
U.S. Department of Health and Human Services
200 Independence Avenue, S.W.
Washington, D.C. 20201

Dear Secretary Becerra,

Taxpayers in Indiana and across the country deserve clear answers about President Joe Biden's proposed budget for Fiscal Year 2023. As you have delayed your scheduled appearance before the House Ways and Means Committee to testify on the proposed budget for the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, I request answers to the following questions regarding the budget and other programs.

- Defeating our country's epidemic of opioid misuse requires identifying all possible ways to treat the very real problem of chronic pain. As a solution, Congress created the Pain Management Best Practices Task Force in the Comprehensive Addiction and Recovery Act (CARA). Today, the need to implement best practices has never been greater. When will the agency complete pain care requirements, such as the Dr. Todd Graham Pain Management Study in Section 6086 of the Substance Use-Disorder Prevention that Promotes Opioid Recovery and Treatment for Patients and Communities Act? Does HHS have a strategic plan to implement Task Force best practices within HHS-related agencies and government wide? What other actions is HHS taking to improve seniors' access to safe, effective, non-opioid pain management treatments and medical technologies in order to reduce risk and improve quality of life?
- The FY 2022 spending bill directs HHS to convene a White House Conference on Food, Nutrition, Hunger, and Health, and it provides the agency with \$2.5 million to support the Conference. I was the Republican co-lead on H.R. 5724, the White House Conference on Food, Nutrition, Hunger, and Health Act, which allows the Republican Leader of the House and the Senate to appoint members to the Conference. Does the Biden Administration plan on allowing House and Senate Republicans the authority to appoint Members to the Conference? Or is the Conference going to be a partisan exercise?
- In 2018, Congress provided a five-year reauthorization of the Maternal, Infant, and Early Childhood Home Visiting (MIECHV) program, which is due for reauthorization this year. Your budget calls for increased funding of MIECHV of \$467 million per year. Can you provide an update on the program as we approach reauthorization? Does the Biden Administration have any recommendations for improvements moving forward outside of increased funding?

- The budget includes zero funding or calls for reauthorization of Health Profession Opportunity Grants (HPOGs), which expired on September 30, 2021. Last year, Committee Democrats included a 5-year reauthorization that increased funding from \$85 million to \$425 million per year in their reconciliation spending package. Last month, HHS published a new evaluation “Health Profession Opportunity Grants (HPOG 1.0) Impact Study: Six-Year Impacts Report” that once again found no impact on earnings or employment outcomes among individuals who completed the training program. Committee Republicans are committed to investing in programs that demonstrate effective and positive outcomes. Can you confirm the President’s position is to eliminate this duplicative and ineffective program?

Thank you for your attention to these important matters. Please provide answers to my questions by April 19, 2022.

Sincerely,



Jackie Walorski
Member of Congress