

# Washington Update

COUNTY OF SANTA BARBARA

April 27, 2016

## FY 2017 APPROPRIATIONS PROCESS

While action on FY 2017 appropriations bills is floundering in the house, in part due to its inability to move forward on a Budget Resolution because of squabbling amongst Majority factions, the Senate is drafting and taking floor action on its FY 2017 spending bills. Of significance to the County, the *FY 2017 Transportation, HUD and Related Agencies Appropriations* bill is ready for floor debate. The committee-approved measure would provide: \$3 billion for CDBG, the same as in the previous year; an increase of \$80 million for Homeless Assistance grants to \$2.33 billion; level funding for Housing Opportunities for People with AIDS (HOPWA) at \$335 million; a decrease of \$3 million for the HUD-Veterans Affairs Supportive Housing Program (HUD-VASH) to \$57 million; and a \$72.3 million increase in funding for elderly housing, to \$505 million. Section 8 funding is increased by 4.6% to \$20.4 billion. Last year, the Senate attempted to dramatically slash funding for the HOME program by over 90%, but this year's bill would provide \$950 million for HOME, the same as the final funding level for FY 2016. The Senate is also preparing for floor consideration of the *FY 2017 Commerce, Justice, Science and Related Agencies Appropriations* bill, which is relevant to a variety of the County's public safety programs.

## INMATE HEALTH CARE COSTS

We joined NACo in meeting with Andy Speth, Senior Advisor to House Speaker Ryan (R-WI), to discuss a variety of issues, including the so-called "inmate exclusion" that prevents individuals from being eligible for Medicaid, Medicare, SSI, and CHIP benefits while they are in the County's jail. NACo was instrumental in the introduction of Congressman Hastings' (D-FL) H.R. 4201, the *Restoring the Partnership for County Health Care Costs Act*, and we continue to join them in advocating in its support. On a separate tack, NACo has been exploring potential administrative avenues to address the inmate exclusion with the Centers

for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS), such as the Medicaid 1115 waiver process. NACo recently sent a letter to HHS Secretary Burwell, urging her to consider potential components to such a waiver. CMS may issue guidance on the issue in the near future.

## PREVENTION & PUBLIC HEALTH FUND

We also joined NACo in contacting the House Energy and Commerce Committee and our local delegation to advocate against H.R. 4725, the *Common Sense Savings Act*, which would eliminate the Prevention and Public Health Fund, which is used to fund CDC's immunizations programs and State block grants to detect and respond to infectious diseases. It also would impose new limits on States' ability to finance the non-Federal share of Medicaid, and cut the Children's Health Insurance Program (CHIP). Additionally, the bill also includes provisions that would eliminate certain existing Medicaid payments when an inmate's acute condition requires in-patient medical care not available with the jail itself, further shifting inmate costs to local governments. H.R. 4725 has now been approved by the Energy and Commerce Committee, and is pending issuance of the committee's report to accompany its action.

## FOSTER CARE PLACEMENTS

We provided County staff with Congressman Young's (R-IN) H.R. 4472, the *Modernizing the Interstate Placement of Children in Foster Care Act*, as well as the House Ways and Means Committee's report to accompany the measure, which discusses its provisions. The bill, which would require States to adopt a centralized electronic system to help expedite the placement of children across State lines in foster care, guardianship, or for adoption, was passed by the Committee in March and quickly approved by the full House by voice vote. It has now been referred to the Senate Finance Committee, where Senate Grassley (R-IA) has sponsored companion legislation as S. 2574.

**LOWER MISSION CREEK**

In March, the Army Corps of Engineers released its “Final Deauthorization List of USACE Projects” as required by WRRDA 2014, and there once again was confusion regarding language that seemed to indicate that the Lower Mission Creek project was amongst those that would be deauthorized, making it ineligible for Federal funding. We brought this to the attention of Congresswoman Capps, who made inquiries with the Corps on the County’s behalf. The Corps clarified that the project authorization included on the list was an inactive version from 1988, and that the current version of the project authorized in 2000 was not impacted.

**FAMILY SUBSTANCE ABUSE SERVICES**

We contacted the Senate Finance Committee to advocate the County’s support for Senator Grassley’s (R-IA) S. 2565, the *Protecting Families Affected By Substance Abuse Act*, which would reauthorize grants to assist children affected by methamphetamine, opioid, or other substance abuse under the promoting safe and stable families program. We also urged Senators Boxer and Feinstein to support the measure, citing the continuing increase in drug-related incidences affecting children and families in the County. Legislation to address the current opioid crisis in particular is a high priority in both the Senate and the House.

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