



SUPPORT CRITICAL FUNDING FOR LIVER RESEARCH AND SERVICES

Liver disease is a rapidly growing public health problem.

- **In 2017, the CDC reported cirrhosis as the 11th leading cause of death in the USA.**
- **Liver cancer diagnoses are growing faster than *any other cancer with a dismal five-year survival rate of just 19 percent, worse than any other cancer but one.***

At least **5.3 million Americans are infected with viral hepatitis** and the majority are undiagnosed while the disease destroys their liver.

Fatty liver disease has emerged as an epidemic in the U.S. **Over one hundred million Americans have non-alcoholic fatty liver disease (NAFLD).** It is now occurring with alarming frequency in children and teens— something never before seen. Like viral hepatitis, NAFLD has no symptoms, can progress to cirrhosis and cancer, and is a major public health threat.

As physicians, patients, and researchers concerned about liver diseases, we urge you to recognize the plight of people who are critically ill or *who will become critically ill if left untreated.* To ignore this is both fiscally and morally irresponsible.

NATIONAL INSTITUTES OF HEALTH – The NIH budget for FY20 is currently \$41.7 billion and we are very grateful to the Congress for the continued support. Even with the investment Congress has made in NIH over the last 5 years, the **spending power of NIH funding is still below its 2003 level.** This is especially troubling as **scientific opportunity has never been greater.** And scientific opportunity leads to a healthier population, economic growth, and more employment and well-paying jobs, which results in greater productivity.

*We strongly support predictable and robust NIH funding growth that will maximize scientific opportunity, promote economic growth, and improve the health of the American people. Congress has started to rebuild NIH's purchasing power. Now it needs to sustain it. **We urge you to add \$3.0 billion to NIH's funding, bringing its budget to a level of \$44.7 billion.***

CENTERS FOR DISEASE CONTROL AND PREVENTION DIVISION OF VIRAL HEPATITIS – The CDC budget overall has been decreased in real dollars several times in the last half decade and the Division of Viral Hepatitis (DVH) has been flat funded since FY2018. **On behalf of the groups represented here today, we urge you to allocate \$134 million for the Division of Viral Hepatitis.**

We recognize that this request represents a \$95 million increase in the Division's funding, yet it does not come close to providing the funding that the CDC estimated would be required to put the United States on the path to eliminating viral hepatitis. In its 2016 Professional Judgement Budget, the CDC estimated it would take at least \$316 million to do this. There is a critical need to enhance the capacity to detect and respond to outbreaks; to enhance the existing surveillance system, especially in high-risk areas; to expand the viral hepatitis infrastructure; and, to incorporate substance use prevention interventions in school-based settings. Increasing funding for the Division of Viral Hepatitis is also critically important to support adult vaccination programs for Hepatitis A and Hepatitis B and address the opioid epidemic. Between 2015 and 2016, rates of acute viral hepatitis increased by 22% driven by increases in opioid use nationwide.

*The time to act is now! Specifically, we strongly support an appropriated budget for the Division of Viral Hepatitis at CDC that is more proportionate to the size of the problem. **We are seeking not less than a \$95 million increase in funding for FY21 for the purposes stated above.***

For more information, please contact Lyle Dennis or Erika Miller at (202) 484-1100.