SEQUESTRATION’S DEVASTATING CUTS TO MATERNAL AND CHILD HEALTH PROGRAMS: LOUISIANA

On January 2, 2013, federal agencies and programs that fund maternal and child health services and research will experience an across-the-board 8.2% cut under sequestration. These cuts will devastate the ability to deliver critical services to mothers and babies in need, disproportionately impact low-income and uninsured families, and deliver a major blow to local economies. Below is a snapshot of how Louisiana women, infants, children and families will be impacted.

ACCESS

- 12,300 mothers and young children in Louisiana will be cut from the Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children (WIC) program. WIC provides nutrition and breastfeeding education, nutritious foods, and improved healthcare and social service access for low and moderate-income women and children.
- Over $342,000 could be cut from the Children’s Hospitals Graduate Medical Education program in Louisiana, which the state relies on to train its next generation of pediatric physicians.

PREVENTION

- Over $1 million would be cut from the Louisiana Title V Maternal and Child Health (MCH) Services Block Grant. This would result in 30,504 fewer women, children and families served in the state. The MCH block grant supports a myriad of initiatives designed to promote optimal health, reduce disparities, combat infant mortality, prevent chronic conditions, and improve access to quality health care in the state. It currently serves 223,475 individuals in the state.
- Over $138,000 would be cut from the Breast and Cervical Cancer Screening Program, resulting in 550 fewer Louisiana women being screened for cancer. Roughly 2,900 cases of breast cancer and 250 cases of cervical cancer are diagnosed every year in Louisiana. This program—which helps low-income and uninsured women get access to cancer screenings—served over 38,000 women in Louisiana over a 5-year period, catching over 135 cervical/pre-malignant cancers and 400 breast cancers.
- Over $194,000 would be cut from the Louisiana Section 317 Immunization Program, resulting in 2,700 fewer children getting vaccinations. This program targets uninsured and low-income children who may not otherwise have access to life-saving vaccinations.
- Louisiana is 1 of 14 CDC-Funded Birth Defects Tracking Systems--cuts from sequestration will eliminate 3 systems and reduce activities at the remaining 11. One out of every 33 babies in Louisiana will be born with a major birth defect. 70% of these defects have unknown causes. Statewide data can be used to identify high risk populations and target birth defects prevention programs.

RESEARCH

- Over $18 million in research funding could be cut from the National Institutes of Health. Currently, about $167 million in NIH-funded awards goes to Louisiana, supporting research at 20 institutions. These grants support local economies, contributing to over 8,180 jobs in biological sciences in Louisiana and over $29 million invested by venture capital firms into biomedical firms between 2004 and 2009.
- Over $319,000 could be cut from the National Institute of Child Health and Human Development – the NIH Institute that conducts a majority of the Nation’s federally-funded maternal and child health research. Louisiana is home to the Tulane/Xavier Bioenvironmental Research Center as well as the LSU Pennington Research Center, both of which are institutions largely funded through NIH grants. Research conducted at these institutions focus on various co-morbidities related to high risk pregnancies, including neural tube defects in diabetic pregnancies, fibroids, and exogenous hormones in pregnancy.