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**Testimony of the Association for Professionals in Infection Control and  
Epidemiology (APIC) and the Society for Healthcare Epidemiology of America  
(SHEA) to the U.S. House Appropriations Subcommittee on Labor, Health and  
Human Services, Education and Related Agencies on Fiscal Year 2020  
Appropriations for the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS)**

**April 8, 2019**

The Association for Professionals in Infection Control and Epidemiology (APIC) and Society for Healthcare Epidemiology of America (SHEA) thank you for this opportunity to submit testimony on federal efforts to detect dangerous infectious diseases, protect the American public from preventable healthcare-associated infections (HAIs) and address the rapidly growing threat of antibiotic resistance (AR). We ask that you support the following programs: **within the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) National Center for Emerging and Zoonotic Infectious Diseases: \$427.9 million for Core Infectious Diseases including \$200 million for the Antibiotic**

**Resistance Solutions Initiative, \$22.75 million for the National Healthcare Safety Network (NHSN), and \$32.5 million for the Advanced Molecular Detection (AMD) Initiative. Additionally, we request \$36 million for HAI research activity conducted by the Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality (AHRQ) and \$4.9 billion for the National Institutes of Health (NIH)/National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases (NIAID).**

HAIs are among the leading cause of preventable harm and death in the United States. One in 31 hospitalized patients has at least one HAI at any given time. Annually that means 687,000 patients will contract a HAI with nearly 72,000 dying as a result. An increasing number of these infections are untreatable due to resistance to our current arsenal of antibiotics. Without immediate intervention, antibiotic resistance can make minor infections become life-threatening and put our ability to perform surgical procedures at risk. The CDC conservatively estimates that in the United States over two million illnesses and about 23,000 deaths are caused by AR infections. According to a 2016 report from the Review on Antimicrobial Resistance, if actions are not taken to combat AR, antibiotics could be rendered ineffective resulting in the deaths of 10 million people annually worldwide by the year 2050.

**Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC)**

**SHEA and APIC request \$427.9 million for Core Infectious Diseases for FY 2020, which includes funding for HAI prevention, AR prevention, and the Emerging Infections Program (EIP).** Through this funding the EIP can continue to work with state health departments and their academic partners to quickly translate surveillance and research activities into policy and public health practice. Core activities of the EIP

Network include:

- Active Bacterial Core surveillance (ABCs): Active population-based laboratory surveillance for invasive bacterial disease.
- FoodNet: Active population-based laboratory surveillance to monitor the incidence of foodborne diseases.
- Influenza activities: Active population-based surveillance for laboratory confirmed influenza-related hospitalizations.
- Healthcare-Associated Infections -- Community Interface (HAIC) projects: Active population-based surveillance for HAIs.

**We urge you to support \$200 million for the Antibiotic Resistance Solutions**

**Initiative.** The AR Solutions Initiative has distributed a large portion of its funds to all 50 state health departments, six large city health departments, and Puerto Rico. By working with state and local health departments the AR Solutions Initiative is protecting life-saving antibiotics and the future of medical innovation from the threat of antibiotic resistance. The program also supports the Antibiotic Resistance Lab Network, which provides the infrastructure and lab capacity for seven regional labs to detect resistant organisms. Through these labs, CDC is able to identify pathogens which are resistant to all or most antibiotics. For instance, in 2017 lab tests uncovered unusual resistance more than 200 times in “nightmare bacteria” alone.

**We urge you to support \$22.75 million for CDC’s National Healthcare Safety Network (NHSN).** NHSN is the vehicle CDC uses to track central line-associated bloodstream infections (CLABSI), catheter-associated urinary tract infections

(CAUTI), surgical site infections (SSI), methicillin-resistant *Staphylococcus aureus* (MRSA), and *Clostridioides difficile* infections. This funding enables the CDC to provide technical support to more than 22,000 healthcare facilities, which represents 65,000 users across the continuum of care. These funds will allow CDC to continue to provide data for national HAI elimination, support assessment of antibiotic prescribing, and enhance prevention efforts by identifying healthcare facilities for improvement. This support will also provide NHSN infrastructure, critical user support, and provide innovative HAI prevention approaches.

**We urge your continued support of \$32.5 million for the Advanced Molecular Detection (AMD) Initiative** in bioinformatics and genomics, which allows CDC to more quickly determine where emerging diseases come from, whether microbes are resistant, and how microbes are moving through a population. This initiative is critical because it strengthens CDC's epidemiologic and laboratory expertise to effectively guide public health action.

**Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality (AHRQ)**

**We request your support of \$36 million for AHRQ's HAI research activity.** This funding supports projects to advance the science of HAI prevention, develop more effective approaches for reducing HAIs, and help clinicians apply proven methods to prevent HAIs on the front lines of care. The projects funded by AHRQ's HAI Program accelerate the implementation of evidence-based methods to reduce HAIs in acute care hospitals as well as ambulatory and long-term care settings. Distinct from the research funded through NIH, AHRQ funds critical research focused on improving the safety and quality of the U.S. healthcare system.

**National Institutes of Health (NIH)/National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases (NIAID)**

**SHEA and APIC support \$4.9 billion for the National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases (NIAID) within NIH.** NIAID plays a key role in advancing research to understand how microbes develop resistance and to identify novel ways to combat them; translation of laboratory findings into potential treatments, vaccines, and new diagnostic tests; clinical validation of diagnostic tests; and clinical trials to evaluate vaccines as well as new and existing therapies against drug-resistant microbes.

We thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony and greatly appreciate your leadership in the effort to eliminate preventable HAIs, combat antibiotic resistance and improve patient safety and outcomes.

**About APIC:** APIC's mission is dedicated to creating a safer world through prevention of infection. The association's nearly 16,000 members direct and maintain infection prevention programs that prevent suffering, save lives and contribute to cost savings for hospitals and other healthcare facilities. APIC advances its mission through patient safety, implementation science, competencies and certification, advocacy, and data standardization. Visit APIC online at [www.apic.org](http://www.apic.org). Follow APIC on Twitter: <http://twitter.com/apic> and Facebook: [www.facebook.com/APICInfectionPreventionandYou](http://www.facebook.com/APICInfectionPreventionandYou). For information on what patients and families can do, visit APIC's Infection Prevention and You website at [www.apic.org/infectionpreventionandyou](http://www.apic.org/infectionpreventionandyou).

**About SHEA:** SHEA is a professional society representing more than 2,000 physicians and other healthcare professionals globally that have expertise in and passion for healthcare epidemiology, infection prevention, and antibiotic stewardship. SHEA's mission is to prevent and control healthcare-associated infections and advance the field of healthcare epidemiology and promote strong antibiotic stewardship programs. The society promotes science and research, develops expert guidelines and guidance for healthcare workers, provides high-quality education, encourages transparency in public reporting related to HAIs, works to ensure a safe healthcare environment, and facilitates the exchange of knowledge in all healthcare settings. SHEA upholds the value and critical contributions of healthcare epidemiology to improving patient care and healthcare worker safety. Visit SHEA online at [www.shea-online.org](http://www.shea-online.org), [www.facebook.com/SHEApreventingHAIs](http://www.facebook.com/SHEApreventingHAIs) and [@SHEA\\_Epi](https://twitter.com/SHEA_Epi).