



President's budget will put children's health at risk

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President's budget would cut important funding to reduce harmful environmental exposures and protect children's health

Washington, D.C., March 20, 2017 — [The Children's Environmental Health Network](#) (CEHN) is strongly opposed to the severe cuts to public health spending put forth in President Donald Trump's 2018 budget request. The President's proposed plan would reduce the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's (EPA) budget by 31%, accomplished by eliminating over 50 EPA programs, including environmental education and environmental justice programs and climate change initiatives. The request also proposes to cut the Department of Health and Human Services budget by 17.9% through elimination of some efforts such as training for health professionals and discretionary programs serving low income populations, and through reduced spending in other areas, including health research.

These drastic cuts to vital public health services will put children at increased risk for poor health and developmental challenges, especially the most vulnerable children—those in low-income and minority communities. The World Health Organization recently reported that more than 1 in 4 deaths of children under the age of 5 (1.7 million children worldwide) are attributable to polluted environments. The agency has also estimated that most of the global burden of disease related to climate change impacts children under 5 years of age. The EPA overall budget is just 0.2 percent of the overall U.S. budget. Thus President Trump's proposed reductions to the agency would not amount to significant savings, especially in light of the fact that childhood illnesses attributed to environmental factors cost an estimated \$76.6 billion per year in the U.S.

Nsedu Obot Witherspoon, MPH, Executive Director of CEHN, stated, "In review of the President's proposed budget, CEHN is quite concerned with the largest proposed cuts to the EPA. There are many examples of how environmental regulations on our air, water, and food supply have provided health protections to children and their families. This large proposed cut of 31% will seriously undermine decades of public health provisions for our most vulnerable while also depriving our states of the capacity they need to provide basic public health protections."

Significant cuts to or elimination of public health services and programs that work to eliminate or reduce harmful exposures to children will result in increased numbers of children burdened with disease and poor developmental outcomes, and increased treatment and care costs. These issues threaten the nation's future workforce and our vitality and stability overall. When children's health is placed at the forefront, and children are allowed to reach their full potential, then America can indeed be great. CEHN urges Congress and the administration to pass spending bills that support key public health programs and initiatives to protect our children and our future.

CEHN is a national nonprofit organization working to protect all children from environmental health hazards and promote a healthier environment. www.cehn.org