

November 14, 2025

The Honorable Shelley Moore Capito
Chair
Subcommittee on Labor, HHS, Education, and
Related Agencies
Senate Committee on Appropriations

The Honorable Robert Aderholt
Chair
Subcommittee on Labor, HHS, Education, and
Related Agencies
House Committee on Appropriations

The Honorable Tammy Baldwin
Ranking Member
Subcommittee on Labor, HHS, Education, and
Related Agencies
Senate Committee on Appropriations

The Honorable Rosa DeLauro
Ranking Member
Subcommittee on Labor, HHS, Education, and
Related Agencies
House Committee on Appropriations

Dear Chair Capito, Ranking Member Baldwin, Chair Aderholt, and Ranking Member DeLauro:

As the Appropriations Committee continues to make important decisions about Fiscal Year (FY) 2026, the Executive Committee of Friends of NCHS thanks you for proposing to keep funding for the National Center for Health Statistics (NCHS) steady in FY 2026 amid a challenging budget climate. While the Friends of NCHS has advocated for an investment of \$220 million for NCHS in FY 2026 and continue to believe this level of funding is necessary to support the center's critical work, we urge you to maintain at least \$187.397 million for NCHS, as proposed by both committees, in final FY 2026 legislation. This funding level, at a minimum, is essential to ensure that NCHS can continue to provide timely, detailed, and unbiased public health and health care data, an indispensable resource for policymakers, researchers, and public health officials.

Additionally, we were troubled by recent reductions in force (RIF) at the Department of Health and Human Services that occurred during the government shutdown and emphasize the importance of maintaining a robust and stable workforce at NCHS. We are pleased that Congress acted through the recent Continuing Resolution to reverse the RIFs that occurred during the lapse in funding, including critical staff at NCHS. It is critical that Congress ensures prompt compliance and that all affected NCHS staff are reinstated. These career public health professionals with statistical expertise are essential to ensuring the accuracy, integrity, and continuity of the nation's health data. Reductions in staff capacity risk disrupting essential data collection and analysis, minimizing the release of critical statistics that policymakers, health systems, and communities rely upon to protect public health. Sustained investment in both workforce and infrastructure is necessary to uphold the scientific independence and reliability that have long defined NCHS's work.

NCHS plays a vital role in monitoring the health of the nation through its efficient, multipurpose data collection systems. These systems produce information on chronic disease prevalence, maternal and infant mortality, emergency room use, causes of death, and insurance coverage, among other key topics outlined in the enclosed [Friends of NCHS FY26](#) priorities document. These datasets are foundational to the nation's statistical and public health infrastructure and are used across federal agencies and by state and local health department to inform decision that improve public health and strengthen health systems.

However, NCHS faces significant challenges. A 21 percent loss in purchasing power since FY 2010 has limited its ability to modernize data collection methods and technologies. Declining response rates and outdated methodologies threaten the quality and reliability of its data. Increased investment is needed to support innovations such as the Rapid Surveys System (RSS) and Model-Based Early Estimates (MBEE), which provide time-sensitive and geographically specific data on emerging health concerns. Additional funding would also allow NCHS to expand its use of Electronic Health Records (EHRs), improve data linkage and modeling capabilities, and enhance the National Health and Nutrition Examination Survey (NHANES) to better understand chronic conditions and nutrition.

Moreover, continued investment in the National Vital Statistics System (NVSS) is necessary to improve the collection and sharing of birth and death records, including data on maternal health, high-risk births, and opioid-related deaths. With additional investment, NVSS can be fully modernized to improve the quality, timeliness, and accessibility of vital records. This includes expanding electronic death registration systems, enhancing data standards, and supporting the newly established Coordinating Office of Medical Examiners and Coroners. These efforts will help improve the quality of death certificate data and ensure more accurate tracking of mortality trends.

The Friends of NCHS Executive Committee acknowledges that neither the Senate or House Appropriations Committee proposed moving NCHS to the Department of Health and Human Services Office of Strategy, as proposed by the President's FY 2026 budget. As Congress and the Administration consider this or any proposed reorganization, we reiterate that NCHS needs sufficient resources to accomplish its critical mission to collect, analyze, and disseminate timely, relevant, and accurate health data statistics to inform the public and guide policy decisions to improve our nation's health. Further, we want to underscore that any potential reorganization proposals impacting NCHS should be thoroughly vetted by the relevant congressional authorizing committees and be informed by input from the public.

As FY 2026 negotiations advance, we respectfully request you maintain at least \$187.397 million for NCHS in the final FY 2026 funding legislation. Through the support of Congress, NCHS will continue to provide the high-quality data needed to protect public health, guide policy, and improve outcomes for all Americans.

Thank you for your consideration of these important issues. If you have any questions, please contact Meghan Riley at mriley@dc-crd.com

Sincerely,
AcademyHealth
American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists
American Statistical Association
Association of Maternal & Child Health Programs
Council of Professional Associations on Federal Statistics
Foundation for Sarcoidosis Research
March of Dimes
National Association for Public Health Statistics and Information Systems
Population Association of America/Association of Population Centers