June 12, 2017

The Honorable Thad Cochran
Chairman
Committee on Appropriations
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Patrick Leahy
Vice Chairman
Committee on Appropriations
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Roy Blunt
Chairman
Labor, Health and Human Services, Education and Related Agencies
Subcommittee
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Patty Murray
Ranking Member
Labor, Health and Human Services, Education and Related Agencies
Subcommittee
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Rodney Frelinghuysen
Chairman
Committee on Appropriations
United States House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Nita Lowey
Ranking Member
Committee on Appropriations
United States House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Tom Cole
Chairman
Labor, Health and Human Services, Education and Related Agencies
Subcommittee
United States House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Rosa DeLauro
Ranking Member
Labor, Health and Human Services, Education and Related Agencies
Subcommittee
United States House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

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RE: Proposed Cuts to the HRSA SPRANS program

Dear Chairs Cochran, Blunt, Frelinghuysen and Cole and Ranking Members Leahy, Murray, Lowey and DeLauro,

CSL Behring would like to express our appreciation to your respective committees and the Congress for rejecting the proposed cuts to the Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA), Maternal and Child Health Block Grant, Special Projects of National Significance (SPRANS) program in the Fiscal Year 2017 Consolidated Appropriations bill. We would also request the funding be maintained for fiscal year 2018.

The SPRANS program includes funding for the national network of hemophilia diagnostic and treatment centers (HTCs), which provide highly specialized care to patients with bleeding disorders and their complications. CSL Behring is concerned that any cuts to the SPRANS hemophilia program would hinder HTCs’ ability to care for people with bleeding disorders. The nationwide HTC network is the crown jewel in the care for people with bleeding disorders as the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention has found that morbidity and mortality is 40% less for individuals who visit their HTC annually.

As a leading manufacturer of blood clotting factors for people with hemophilia, von Willebrand Disease and other rare bleeding disorders, CSL Behring is committed to ensuring that patients obtain the most appropriate treatment based on their individual healthcare needs. This includes access to the full range of FDA approved hemophilia clotting factors and comprehensive hemophilia treatment centers, as well as choice of experienced pharmacy providers, including pharmacy programs administered by hemophilia treatment centers.

The network of HTCs are federally recognized facilities that provide a comprehensive model of care for people with bleeding disorders. Patients receive coordinated care within one facility which is typically comprised of a multi-disciplinary team of experts in hemophilia including hematologists, pediatricians, nurses, social workers and physical therapists.

Hemophilia treatment centers are also included in a specific category of HRSA grantees that participate in the 340B drug discount program. The 340B program has served as a source of funding for comprehensive hemophilia care and has helped hemophilia treatment centers provide access to high quality care to all patients, both insured and uninsured.
CSL Behring is of the opinion that HTCs within the 340B program provide a necessary option for individuals with bleeding disorders. Between the HTC network and the array of specialty pharmacy providers, individuals can choose the provider which best meets their individual needs. Pharmacy programs administered by hemophilia treatment centers are an option that should be available to all patients. We hope to ensure that individuals with bleeding disorders have full access to the treatments and specialists they need to live healthy and productive lives. Any cuts to the SPRANS program threatens an HTC’s ability to provide care to individuals with bleeding disorders.

Thank you for maintaining the funding for this critical program in fiscal year 2017 and please consider ensuring the program continues to receive the necessary funding in fiscal year 2018.

Sincerely,

Patrick Collins
Sr. Director, Healthcare Policy & External Affairs