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CDC's Global Surveillance System Budget Approved

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The Clinton administration requested a $26 million budget increase in 1997 over the 1996 funding level to expand the CDC's National Center for Infectious Disease (NCID) Emerging Infectious Disease program to control the worldwide spread of infectious diseases. In June, the House Appropriations Committee completed markup of their FY97 HHS Appropriations Bill that provides $82 million for CDC's NCID—$20 million above the 1996 funding level and approximately $5 million short of the President's request. This would represent a 32% increase in NCID's budget, compared to the modest 2.9% increase in the overall FY97 funding level appropriated for the CDC.

The committee report cites the 1992 Institute of Medicine Report on Emerging Infections: Microbial Threats to Health in the United States and the four pillars (surveillance, applied research, prevention and control, and developing infrastructure) of the CDC's responding strategic plan. The committee directs the CDC to address the infrastructure development component of the plan as a priority, citing the deterioration of local, state, and federal laboratories as handicapping effective disease surveillance efforts.

The additional funding also would support what Vice-President Al Gore called "a global surveillance system." A key component of the plan is a worldwide system of computer links with other countries lacking such technology. It also would allow the CDC to expand the number of regional infectious disease centers in the United States. Other aspects of this initiative are expansion of the training programs within the National Institute of Health, allowing foreign researchers to use Defense Department Laboratories abroad to conduct special tests and studies, and expanding private sector input by scientists and healthcare companies already working with the government to prevent the spread of disease.

The Senate Appropriation Committee was scheduled to review the bill in mid-July.

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