

## Health, Education Programs would face Crippling Cuts

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The Bush Administration released its budget recommendations for the 2007 fiscal year today and the implications for the addiction services community are disheartening. Funding for many critical health programs would be dramatically reduced and many of the cuts would have a crippling impact on addiction services and treatment.

The budget proposal calls for reducing funds available for the training of health professionals, citing the programs to be "ineffective." These programs prepare and support students and clinicians through loan forgiveness and scholarship opportunities.

"To cut funding for programs that would foster the training of health professionals, at a time when the public health is far from strong does not make for sound health policy," said Andrew Kessler, Director of Government Relations for NAADAC. "The budget report cites that there is no shortage of physicians in the U.S., but there are other indispensable health professions in the country that face a dire shortage, including addiction counselors. We need to recruit, retain and reward an educated and dedicated work force if we are to have any chance against the disease of addiction."

Also slated for cuts are the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA), the Center for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), the Health Resources and Services Administration and the Safe and Drug Free School Program - which faces a cut of more than 50%. The National Institutes of Health (NIH) received an increase of less than one percent, which will effectively amount to a cut in real dollars when inflation is factored into the equation. The Administration also favors removing \$500 million from the Social Services Block grant, which funds such programs as substance abuse, independent and transitional living and a host of other social services.

For the second straight year, the Administration has requested that no funds be made available for the Community Services Block Grant Program (CSBG), which is responsible for dispersing funds to states and U.S. territories in an attempt to lessen poverty and improve education and health programs. The Preventive Health Block Grant, which promotes

emergency medical services, health education and risk prevention is also facing elimination.

"NAADAC is committed to working closely with congressional appropriators and other health oriented organizations to restore the cuts made by the Administration," said Kessler. "However, we are forced to start from a position that puts us at a tremendous disadvantage."