



Policy Watch



Tuesday, August 20, 2011

Congressional Activities

The House and Senate will both consider a continuing resolution (CR) next week to fund government departments and agencies at the start of the new fiscal year on October 1st. Currently, the full House has approved six of twelve bills; the Senate has finished one - neither chamber has approved the often contentious Labor-Health and Human Services (HHS)-Education bill that funds critical prevention and treatment health programs. The measure, expected to run until November 18, would fund the government at the \$1.043 trillion annual level included in the debt limit agreement, reached by Congress and the White House ([PL 112-25](#)) - the agreement is 1.4 percent below current FY 2011 spending.

In terms of the impact on Labor-HHS-Education Appropriations, the Senate has announced that their funding allocations will be \$300 million less than FY 2011 and while the House has not made their allocations public, it is expected to be lower than the Senate. How these cuts will be within the Labor-HHS-Education appropriations bill remain to be seen.

NBGMAC continues to be very engaged in coalition activities to increase the overall resources available for prevention and care and treatment that impact Black gay men.

Fiscal Year 2013 Budget

In preparation for the President's FY2013 budget development process, the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) requested that federal agencies submit budget scenarios between five and ten percent below their FY2011 enacted discretionary appropriation levels. Instead of across-the-board reductions, OMB has stated that the goal is to eliminate "low priority" and "wasteful" programs while achieving better performance with the resources they have in light of anticipated reductions stemming from the Budget Control Act.

Congressional Joint Deficit Committee

The Budget Control Act of 2011 signed by President Obama on August 2, 2011, immediately raised the debt limit by at least \$2.1 trillion (gradually) and formed a 12 person bipartisan Congressional committee chosen by leadership in the House and Senate tasked with reducing the deficit by \$1.5 trillion by FY2021 (or at least \$1.2 T). The [Joint Deficit Committee](#), also known as the "Super Committee," has unprecedented authority to dictate legislation and policies that will achieve the mandated savings. Specifically, the Supercommittee can raise revenues and make cuts in spending to mandatory and/or discretionary programs and military and/or domestic programs. Their plan

must be voted on in committee by November 23, 2011 and Congress must vote by December 23, 2011. If the Supercommittee cannot agree on a bill to send to Congress, "sequestration" would be triggered resulting in automatic cuts of up to \$1.2 trillion starting in January of 2013.

In terms of the implications for HIV/AIDS programs, everything is subject to cuts, including entitlement programs such as Medicaid and Medicare, a significant payer for people living with HIV/AIDS. The Supercommittee can also make alterations to the structure and funding for Medicaid and Medicare and these changes will impact the growing number of people living with HIV/AIDS who utilize them. Such changes could also impact an individual state's own contribution to these programs. Additionally, large cuts and/or caps on non-discretionary funding would shrink the overall pool of money available to all programs. The trickle down impact could mean fewer resources for programs such as Ryan White, ADAP, etc - programs utilized by Black gay men. Additionally, the Congressional Budget Office released an [analysis](#) detailing the impact of automatic cuts via the sequestration process.

Congressional HIV/AIDS Caucus

On September 15, 2011, the bipartisan HIV/AIDS Caucus was launched at a press conference on Capitol Hill. The Caucus is comprised of three Co-Chairs: Representatives Barbara Lee (D-CA), Trent Franks (R-AZ) and Jim McDermott (D-WA) and currently has 59 [members](#). The purpose of the Caucus is to create a forum for Members of Congress to address the significant issues surrounding HIV/AIDS through regular events, briefings, conferences and other means designed to bring broader attention and better focus to the pandemic.

NBGMAC Policy Committee Call

NBGMAC will hold a Policy Committee call on Wednesday, September 28 at 3:00 PM (EDT). This call will focus on updating NBGMAC's seminal Policy Agenda document, including discussion of key themes, recommendations and dissemination next steps. For additional information and/or to RSVP for this call, please contact [Terrance Moore](#) or [Kali Lindsey](#).