Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

May 30, 2012

The Honorable Thomas Frieden, MD, MPH
Director
Centers for Disease Control and Prevention
1600 Clifton Road
Atlanta, GA 30333

Dear Dr. Frieden:

We are writing again to express our deep concern regarding the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's (CDC) proposed plan to reorganize CDC's individual Human Development and Disability programs into a centralized Health and Development for People with Disabilities program. As some of us stated in our letter last year, we are gravely concerned that this consolidation plan would have the effect of reducing the effectiveness of CDC's programs supporting the disability communities. In fact, in your own response to our 2011 letter, dated October 18, 2011, you specifically mentioned that the: "transition to the proposed consolidated program would result in an overall reduction of total Funding Opportunity Announcements from 56 FOAs in 2011 to 22 FOAs in 2015 - a reduction of over 50%.

More than a decade ago, many disability rights organizations worked closely with Congress to create the National Center on Birth Defects and Developmental Disabilities (NCBDDD) in order to put issues important to the disability community on our national public health agenda. By and large we believe the Center has been a tremendous success; and that success we believe is due in no small part to CDC's recognition that the disability community is made up of very different and unique populations with different and unique needs. That is why we are very concerned about CDC's proposed consolidation plan.

As we stated in our letter last year, NCBDDD's programs are not duplicative of programs elsewhere in the Federal budget, and it is unlikely that the efficiencies typically associated with consolidation would be achieved in this case. Nevertheless, a decade of work has built a number of programs and services that are having positive and measurable impacts on the lives of countless American children, adults and their families burdened with the challenges and costs of disability.

While we fully appreciate that we must take action to address our nation's fiscal situation, and we applaud the CDC's commitment to seeking appropriate savings wherever possible, we believe that the reduction in support envisioned by CDC is more likely than not going to undermine the years of infrastructure and expertise built up to serve the disability community, to the detriment of disabled individuals.. In addition, report language included in the *FY 2012 Consolidated Appropriations Bill* stated if the Administration decided to put forward the consolidation plan for the 2013 budget, it must also provide a needs assessment that includes the categories of the disabilities currently served, validates the value of such a consolidation, considers the input of stakeholders and establishes the basis for any proposed efficiencies and commonalities. To date, we have seen no such assessment.

We believe that Congress spoke very clearly in the *FY 2012 Consolidated Appropriations Bill* that it is incumbent upon the CDC to sufficiently demonstrate to the disability community, partner organizations, and members of Congress how consolidating the programs of NCBDDD will allow CDC to continue to meet the needs and provide essential elements of support for individuals with disabilities before moving forward with the plan. Therefore, we respectfully ask you to further explain to all interested stakeholders, including members of Congress, the rationale for consolidation and to immediately publicly release copies of all studies, analysis, and evaluations CDC used to make this decision.

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On behalf of America's disabled community, we deeply appreciate your personal time and attention to this critically important issue.

Sincerely,

Dan Burton
Member of Congress

Charles B. Rangel
Member of Congress

Gregg Harper
Member of Congress

Luis V. Gutierrez
Member of Congress

Richard E. Neal
Member of Congress

Edolphus Towns
Member of Congress

Maxine Waters
Member of Congress

Henry C. "Hank" Johnson, Jr.
Member of Congress

Barbara Lee
Member of Congress

Gregorio Kilili Camacho Sablan
Member of Congress

Jesse L. Jackson, Jr.
Member of Congress

C.W. Bill Young
Member of Congress

Donna M. Christensen
Member of Congress

Madeleine Z. Bordallo
Member of Congress

James P. Moran
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Eleanor Holmes Norton
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Laura Richardson
Member of Congress

Christopher H. Smith
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André Carson
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Bob Filner
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Robert J. Dold
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Theodore E. Deutch
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Danny K. Davis
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Silvestre Reyes
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Peter T. King
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Ileana Ros-Lehtinen
Member of Congress