

## **House Panel Okays Billion Dollar Boost for National Institutes of Health**

By John Reichard, CQ HealthBeat Editor

A House appropriations panel approved \$1 billion in added funding for the National Institutes of Health in fiscal 2011, a sum that would bring the budget of the medical research agency to \$32 billion.

Rep. David R. Obey, D-Wis., chairman of the panel, said that this years bill puts the emphasis on translating basic research results into practical and available cures and treatments. Among other things, it permits NIH to use up to \$50 million to launch a newly authorized program aimed at that objective, which is called the Cures Acceleration Network.

Other health agencies would see funding remain about the same under the spending bill approved July 15 by Obeyes panel, the House Labor-Education-HHS Appropriations Subcommittee.

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention would get \$6.78 billion, the Health Resources and Services Administration \$7.6 billion, the Substance Abuse and the Mental Health Services Administration \$3.58 billion. The Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality would get funding of \$411 million.

The program management category at the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services, which includes administrative funds for the agency, would see an increase of \$131 million to a total of \$3.6 billion. The Health Care Fraud and Abuse Control program at CMS would get a big upward bump of \$250 million to a total of \$561 million.

Obey said that among other things, the funding in this bill will allow the FBI and the HHS Inspector General to expand their joint health care fraud strike force teams from seven to 20 cities.

The AIDS Institute, which advocates higher funding for HIV/AIDS treatment and prevention programs, issued a statement praising Obey for increases approved by the panel.

It noted that the subcommittee okayed an increase of \$84 million for the Ryan White HIV/AIDS program a help, but it is far from the \$370 million that is needed for next year, said the institutes executive director Carl Schmid. The program includes AIDS Drug Assistance Programs, which currently have waiting lists totaling 2,300 people in 12 states. The subcommittee also approved a \$29 million increase in funding for HIV prevention programs at the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.