

# United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

June 12, 2007

The Honorable Tom Harkin  
Chairman  
Subcommittee on Labor, Health and  
Human Services and Education  
Senate Committee on Appropriations  
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Arlen Specter  
Ranking Member  
Subcommittee on Labor, Health and  
Human Services and Education  
Senate Committee on Appropriations  
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Chairman Harkin and Senator Specter:

As you develop the Fiscal Year 2008 appropriations legislation for the Departments of Labor, Health and Human Services and Education, we write to request funds for the establishment of a national cerebral palsy (CP) surveillance program at the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC).

Cerebral palsy is one of the most common developmental disabilities in the United States. CDC estimates that over 764,000 children and adults are afflicted with some degree of CP, with 10,000 babies born each year developing the disability. Persons living with CP may also live with seizures, impaired intellectual development, and compromised vision, hearing, and behavior.

A majority of these individuals have no well-defined cause for their condition and will require a lifetime of additional medical services. The average lifetime cost for a person with the disability is estimated to be well over \$1.5 million more than the cost of living for a person without CP. This includes the expenses associated with additional doctor visits, speech and physical therapy, surgery, prescription drugs, transportation, and other needed services.

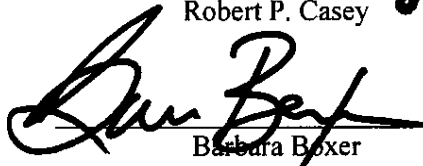
Although CP may be increasing in prevalence, it has never been studied at the national level and there is no national surveillance system to monitor its occurrence. CDC currently tracks CP at only four sites across the nation, as federal funds are insufficient to expand surveillance to more locations. Nationwide surveillance is necessary to better understand how to prevent, identify, treat, and hopefully cure CP.

As the Subcommittee prepares the FY 2008 Labor, Health and Human Services and Education Appropriations bill, we urge you to provide funding for a national surveillance system through CDC to help identify the causes, prevalence, treatments, and possible cures for CP. Thank you for your consideration of our request.

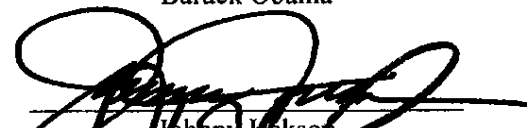
Sincerely,

  
Richard J. Durbin

  
Robert P. Casey

  
Barbara Boxer

  
Barack Obama

  
Johnny Isakson

  
Sherrod Brown

