![SHEA - The Society for Healthcare Epidemiology of America]

January 22, 2024

The Honorable Tammy Baldwin
Chair, Senate Appropriations
Subcommittee on Labor-HHS
136 Dirksen Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Shelley Moore Capito
Ranking Member, Senate Appropriations
Subcommittee on Labor-HHS
172 Russell Senate Office Building
Washington DC, 20510

The Honorable Robert Aderholt
Chair, House Appropriations
Subcommittee on Labor-HHS
2358-B Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Rosa DeLauro
Ranking Member, House Appropriations
Subcommittee on Labor-HHS
1016 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairwoman Baldwin, Ranking Member Capito, Chairman Aderholt, and Ranking Member DeLauro,

As you work to finalize the Fiscal Year (FY) 2024 Labor-HHS spending bill, on behalf the Society for Healthcare Epidemiology of America (SHEA), I request that at minimum you retain FY 2023 funding level of $24 million for the National Healthcare Safety Network (NHSN). We appreciate both the House and Senate recognizing the importance of NHSN and maintaining FY 2023 funding in your respective bills, and we hope you will continue to do the same in conference.

The NHSN is the nation's most widely used surveillance system for tracking and collecting data on the prevalence of healthcare-associated infections (HAIs) and antibiotic prescribing trends. Since it was established in 2005, the NHSN has expanded beyond its original intended capacity and exceeded expectations for decreasing the prevalence of HAIs and MDROs. The NHSN is used by nearly 38,000 healthcare facilities along with the CDC, state and local public health departments, and medical researchers and serves as the primary hub for healthcare data collection.

In order to meet the projected demands for disease surveillance systems, the NHSN will require at least $60 million in the next few years to sustain a fully modernized and automated system. However, given the current fiscal constraints, we are hopeful that at minimum the FY 2023 funding levels can be maintained. About one in 31 hospitalized patients (3.2%) develops at least one HAI, and the burden of these infections accounts for about $28 billion in direct costs each year. Maintaining a properly modernized surveillance system is an essential action to help hospitals keep patients safe and save funding in the long run.

Thank you for your attention to this request,

Sincerely,

Thomas R. Talbot, III, MD, MPH, FSHEA
President, SHEA