

\$2.3B Funding Boost for HHS Heads to President's Desk

By Shira Stein

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- House passes spending bill that includes \$2B bump for NIH
- Bill now heads to president's desk

The House Sept. 26 passed by a vote of 361-61 a spending bill that would boost funding to the HHS by \$2.3 billion for fiscal year 2019. The bill now heads to President Donald Trump's desk ahead of the new fiscal year, which begins Oct. 1.

The \$90.5 billion for the Department of Health and Human Services was part of a package (H.R. 6157) of funding measures for the departments of Defense, Labor, and Education. Most of the funding increase will go to the National Institutes of Health, which received a \$2 billion bump in funding.

The additional funding for the NIH is the latest in a series of funding increases for the agency. The additional funding is aimed at accelerating treatments for cancer, Alzheimer's disease, and other ailments and at addressing the nation's opioid epidemic.

The Senate passed the spending bill 93-7 on Sept. 18.

The package includes \$6.7 billion to combat the opioid crisis and to increase access to mental health services. This is in addition to grant money in a package of opioid-related bills that the Senate passed Sept. 17.

The package also includes three measures that would address the separation of children and parents at the southern border, including a measure that would require HHS Secretary Alex Azar to submit a family reunification plan to Congress by Nov. 15.

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