

occurring in healthcare settings from exposure to infected blood or the reuse of contaminated syringes. According to the CDC, unsafe injection practices are one of the leading causes of infections in healthcare settings. Although most healthcare workers are aware of the dangers and strictly follow safety guidelines when administering injections, outbreaks of hepatitis in recent years have shown the continued need for awareness, education, and stringent safety practices in healthcare settings.

Chronic liver disease is among the top ten killers of Americans and hepatitis C accounts for 40 to 60 percent of all cases. While there is a safe vaccine for several types of viral hepatitis, no vaccine exists for hepatitis C. It has been identified as one of the most significant preventable and treatable public health problems facing the United States. Clearly we must continue to increase awareness of the disease to prevent new infections, encourage screening and tests, and link those that are infected with the care they need.

It is my hope that awareness efforts throughout the month of May will bring to light the significant and silent health threat of hepatitis, encourage appropriate screening and management of the disease, promote vigilant safety practices in healthcare settings and prevent further transmissions of the disease.

HIV VACCINE AWARENESS DAY

Mr. COBURN. Mr. President, I rise today to express grave concern regarding the misplaced priority of annually deeming this day, May 18, HIV Vaccine Awareness Day. This year marks the 13th annual observance of a day that epitomizes our government's inability to set priorities with the Federal dollars this body is entrusted.

According to the National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases, NIAID, Web site:

This annual observance is a day to recognize and thank the thousands of volunteers, community members, health professionals, and scientists who are working together to find a safe and effective HIV vaccine. It is also a day to educate our communities about the importance of preventive HIV vaccine research.

As a practicing physician and former cochair of the Presidential Advisory Council on HIV and AIDS, I believe the development of a safe and effective HIV vaccine should be among our Nation's highest health care priorities. HIV/AIDS continues to devastate communities in the United States and around the world. In the United States, more than 50,000 people become infected with HIV each year. Approximately 40 million people are living with HIV around the world, with more than 5 million new infections each year. To date, more than 25 million men, women and children are believed to have died from AIDS worldwide.

Unfortunately, we have not yet developed an effective HIV/AIDS vac-

cine—nor are we close. At a time when our national debt is approaching \$13 trillion and patients suffering from HIV/AIDS are being put on waiting lists for life-saving drug treatments, we simply cannot afford to misspend \$1 million a year to make people aware of a nonexistent vaccine.

Furthermore, this well-intentioned propaganda campaign is being funded at the expense of HIV vaccine research itself. Regardless of the intentions, the unfortunate fact is that finite resources intended for HIV vaccine research are being siphoned away for a project without any potential scientific benefit. With no effective vaccine likely anytime soon, it seems silly, or worse, to waste funding that could be much better spent on research or scientific investments that could one day lead to a vaccine.

The discovery of a vaccine or cure, after all, would be the best way to thank the researchers and volunteers. As every cent counts in this endeavor, it is unconscionable that precious dollars are being squandered by NIAID's well intentioned but unnecessary public relations campaign.

Between 2001 and 2005, NIH spent more than \$5.2 million on this "HIV vaccine awareness" campaign, not including staff time or travel expenses. It is reasonable to assume that the federal government continues to waste over \$1 million annually on HIV vaccine awareness, despite the fact that no vaccine exists and scientists believe that it is unlikely that a HIV vaccine will be developed anytime soon.

Some of the HIV Vaccine Awareness Day events supported in the past include various lunch and dinner receptions, a fashion show in Massachusetts, a bar night in Tennessee, a bar event and entertainment contest in Washington, and other gatherings and media events. Clearly, this awareness campaign serves no obvious public health or scientific value.

There is no doubt, however, that development of an HIV/AIDS vaccine should be a national priority. HIV/AIDS continues to devastate communities in the United States and around the world. At least 56,000 Americans become infected with HIV each year. More than 33 million people are living with HIV around the world, with more than 2.5 million new infections each year. To date, more than 20 million men, women and children are believed to have died from AIDS worldwide.

The development of a safe and effective HIV vaccine should be among our Nation's highest health care priorities. It imperative that not a single dollar of the Federal funds set aside for the development of an effective HIV vaccine is wasted.

This year, Dr. Anthony Fauci, head of the National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases, NIAID, highlighted what he called "significant progress in HIV vaccine research during the past year." The study he referred to was a clinical trial in Thailand finding a vac-

cine to be 31 percent effective at preventing HIV infection. Unfortunately, the results of this study have been found to be statistically insignificant and the findings of the study have received much skepticism. This latest clinical trial is the latest in a long line of promising but unsuccessful attempts at creating an HIV/AIDS vaccine.

Dr. Fauci in recent years has conceded publicly that no one has been very close to developing a vaccine that would prevent infection. Over the past 5 years, in fact, two large clinical trials of HIV vaccines have failed to demonstrate efficacy of the candidate being tested. The disputed Thailand trial aside, this is still the case today.

Most scientists involved in AIDS research believe that an HIV vaccine is further away than ever and some have admitted that effective immunization against the virus may never be possible, according to a survey conducted released in 2008.

A poll of scientists reflects the declaration made at a NIH "summit meeting" in 2008 that was "tantamount to an admission that almost no progress has been made in the search for an AIDS vaccine in the past 25 years and that something close to new start is necessary." The government scientists announced that "more of their budget needs to be spent on basic lab research and less on testing the current crop of vaccines, none of which has proved useful in human trials." In light of these failures and daunting prospects, Dr. Fauci pledged to re-evaluate the use of all \$1.5 billion his agency spends on AIDS noting that "we are going to have to justify what we are doing."

Dr. Anthony Fauci has noted that while Federal funding for the National Institutes of Health, NIH, continues to increase, it will not increase as quickly as it has the past decade, and as a result, NIH must concentrate on more promising research. Fauci said the heads of NIH institutes such as his had been told to reexamine the entire research portfolio to ensure "the most bang for the buck." The AIDS vaccine candidates that don't show early results in clinical trials could be shut down, he said.

That may mean cutting back some AIDS vaccine research even though virtually all health experts agree a vaccine will be the only way to stop the pandemic of a virus that is incurable, always fatal and that continues to spread worldwide and in the U.S.

As I have done in the past, I am sending a letter today to the Secretary of Health and Human Services to inquire about this misuse of funds. It is my sincere hope that the Department of Health and Human Services will cease spending Federal dollars on this misplaced priority and reinvest these HIV/AIDS dollars into actual research or care.

Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent to have printed in the RECORD my letter dated May 18, 2010, to Secretary Kathleen Sebelius.

There being no objection, the material was ordered to be printed in the RECORD, as follows:

U.S. SENATE

Washington, DC, May 18, 2010.

Hon. KATHLEEN SEBELIUS,
Secretary, Department of Health and Human
Services, Washington, DC.

DEAR SECRETARY SEBELIUS: As a practicing physician and former co-chair of the Presidential Advisory Council on HIV and AIDS, I believe the development of a safe and effective HIV vaccine should be among our nation's highest health care priorities. HIV/AIDS continues to devastate communities in the United States and around the world. In the United States, more than 50,000 people become infected with HIV each year. To date, more than 25 million men, women and children are believed to have died from AIDS worldwide.

During this time of fiscal restraint when our nation is faced with an approximately \$13 trillion national debt and over 1,000 individuals on waiting lists for life-saving HIV/AIDS drug treatments, we must be careful that not a single dollar that could pay off this debt or serve some other vital service—is such as developing an HIV vaccine—is diverted for less important purposes.

According to the National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases (NIAID) website, May 18, 2010 marks the thirteenth annual HIV Vaccine Awareness Day: "This annual observance is a day to recognize and thank the thousands of volunteers, community members, health professionals, and scientists who are working together to find a safe and effective HIV vaccine. It is also a day to educate our communities about the importance of preventive HIV vaccine research."

In addition to my concern that these funds are diverted from the more important goals of developing a vaccine or providing care to patients in need, HIV Vaccine Awareness Day has been marked by specific examples of wasteful spending. In the past, related expenditures have included various lunch and dinner receptions, a fashion show in Massachusetts, a bar night in Tennessee, a bar event and entertainment contest in Washington, and other gatherings and media events.

Would you please provide:

(1) The total amount of federal funding that was spent to promote "HIV Awareness Day" in 2010 and for each fiscal year since its inception in 2001, including staff time and travel costs;

(2) If this event is planned for next year please, an estimate of its likely cost;

(3) A list of all organizations that received funding from NIAID as part of "HIV Vaccine Awareness Day" since its inception and a description of the activities performed with these funds; and

(4) The total amount NIH has spent on actual HIV vaccine research in each year from fiscal year 2001 through 2010.

Thank you for your attention to this request. I look forward to a prompt reply.

Sincerely,

SENATOR TOM COBURN, MD.

ADDITIONAL STATEMENTS

REMEMBERING MARGARET JOAN MORGAN FOLEY

• Mrs. BOXER. Mr. President, I ask my colleagues to join me in honoring the memory of Margaret Joan Morgan Foley. Mrs. Foley passed away on May 9 at her home in Visalia. She was 87 years old.

Margaret Foley was born in Dawson Springs, KY, on November 5, 1922. After obtaining her registered nursing license at the age of 21 from the Salem School of Nursing, she enlisted in the U.S. Army in the fall of 1943. During World War II, she would serve in the Philippines and Nagasaki, Japan.

Upon her return home, Mrs. Foley settled in Los Angeles where she worked as a surgical nurse at Saint Luke's Hospital. During this period, she met and married James Foley. A person of remarkable character and determination, Mrs. Foley was undeterred by a bout with tuberculosis that required a 23-month stay at a sanitarium in Altadena, as she fought valiantly to full recovery and continued her education at the University of Southern California.

In 1955, the Foleys moved north to Tulare, where Mr. Foley accepted a job as a reporter for the Tulare Advance-Register. Spurred on by a lifelong passion to improve the education, health and welfare of children and the poor, Mrs. Foley generously lent her time and considerable talents to a number of important community causes; the Parent Teacher Association, the Tulare Mental Health Advisory Board, Tulare County Legal Services, Tulare County Health System Agency, and the Porterville State Board Hospital.

In 1969, Mrs. Foley resumed working as a part-time nurse at Kaweah Delta District Hospital. For the next 21 years, she successfully served as a nursing supervisor for neonatal care and eventually becoming the perinatal manager for the hospital until her retirement in 1990.

Mrs. Foley continued her commitment to help those who are less fortunate during her retirement. In 1990, she was elected to the Kaweah Delta Health Care District Board of Directors. For the next 20 years, she would leave an indelible impact on the board through her tenures as its secretary, vice president, and president. As someone who was always willing to lend a helping hand, she also served on the College of the Sequoias Nursing Advisory Committee, the Good Samaritan Board, and as a staff nurse at the Good News Clinic. Mrs. Foley embodied the best ideals of volunteerism and public service.

A person of great warmth and humility, Mrs. Foley was admired by those who knew her for her kindness, compassion and decency. She was the inaugural recipient of the Tulare County Bar Association Liberty Bell Award in 1976, the 1980 Visalia Chamber of Commerce Woman of the Year, 1983 College of the Sequoias Nursing Faculty's Nurse of the Year and, most recently, the 2006 Rose Ann Vuich Ethical Leadership Award, a well-deserved and prestigious award that celebrates excellence and integrity in public service.

Margaret Foley devoted most of her life to making a positive impact on the lives of others. Mrs. Foley's generously gave her boundless compassion and pre-

cious humanity to uplifting and empowering those who are most often neglected in our society: the young and the poor. Mrs. Foley has left behind a legacy of service and the admiration of those whose lives she touched over the years. She will be dearly missed.

Mrs. Foley was preceded in death by her husband Jim; her parents William Roderick and Florence Pugh Morgan; two brothers, Roderick William and John Paul Morgan; and a sister Ann Trader Schweiger. She is survived by her children, James and his wife Penelope Applegarth; John and his wife Anne Bird; Morgan and his wife Sandra Platt; Sara Foley Fox and her husband Michael; and Patricia Foley Teaford and her husband Elliott; seven grandchildren; and two brothers, William Radtke and James Trader. •

TRIBUTE TO UNDERSHERIFF VALERIE HILL

• Mrs. BOXER. Mr. President, I am honored to recognize undersheriff Valerie Hill as she retires from the Riverside County Sheriff's Department. Undersheriff Hill, the highest ranking female in law enforcement in Riverside County, has served the people and the county of Riverside for over 30 years.

When Undersheriff Hill joined the Riverside County Sheriff's Department in 1977, she was assigned patrol duties in Lake Elsinore and later worked in the Riverside and Moreno Valley stations. As a sergeant, she served in Corrections and also at the Moreno Valley station. Over the course of her career she has had many other assignments within the Sheriff's Department. As assistant sheriff she was responsible for Corrections Division, Court Services and CAL-ID. Her numerous assignments over the past 30 years have given her the opportunity to become actively involved in the changes occurring in Riverside County.

Undersheriff Hill was the department's first female hostage negotiator, first female field training officer, first female assistant sheriff, and first female undersheriff. She was also one of two individuals instrumental in the development of the Special Enforcement Team (S.E.T.), which is a highly successful enforcement team in Moreno Valley.

Believing that community service extends beyond her duties in the department, Undersheriff Hill serves on numerous boards and committees, which include: Operation SafeHouse (board president), Riverside Area Rape Crisis Center (2006 and 2007 board president), Southern California Jail Managers Association (2006 president), YWCA (Evening of Achievement chairperson), and is an active member of the Kiwanis Club of Riverside. She volunteers two Sunday evenings a month through her church at a "hot meal" program that feeds the needy. She believes "We make a living by what we get but, we make a life by what we give."