#### **TESTIMONY**

**OF** 

## ROCHELLE P. WALENSKY, M.D., M.P.H.

## DIRECTOR

## CENTERS FOR DISEASE CONTROL AND PREVENTION

#### DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES

#### **BEFORE THE**

UNITED STATES HOUSE APPROPRIATIONS SUBCOMMITTEE ON LABOR, HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES, EDUCATION, AND RELATED AGENCIES

HEARING ON THE FY 2024 BUDGET REQUEST FOR THE NATIONAL INSTITUTES OF HEALTH, CENTERS FOR DISEASE CONTROL AND PREVENTION, AND THE ADMINISTRATION FOR STRATEGIC PREPAREDNESS AND RESPONSE

**APRIL 19, 2023** 

## **INTRODUCTION**

Chair Aderholt, Ranking Member DeLauro, and distinguished members of the Committee, it is an honor to appear before you today to discuss how investments in the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) are protecting Americans' lives every day, now and in the future. I am grateful for the opportunity to address this Committee and for your long-standing commitment to improving the health of people in our nation and the world.

It is my privilege to represent CDC at this hearing. For more than 75 years, CDC has been working 24/7 to protect America from health, safety, and security threats. Whether diseases start at home or abroad, are chronic or acute, are curable or preventable, or due to human error or deliberate attack, CDC fights disease and supports communities and citizens to do the same.

CDC cannot meet its public health mission without the help of Congress. Together, we must stop the cycle of investing and disinvesting in public health infrastructure. In addition, just as the world has changed, CDC's mission has grown and become increasingly complex. While CDC has always raced to deploy experts to the heart of whatever public health emergency is unfolding, the number, pace, and nature of these responses has escalated. Americans' expectations for rapid, effective government response have grown; CDC must have the tools it needs to meet these expectations. Today, I will outline how the President's Budget for FY 2024 will better position our nation to continue responding to known and novel threats to our health.

The President's Fiscal Year (FY) 2024 Budget request includes \$11.6 billion in discretionary budget authority, the Prevention and Public Health Fund (PPHF), and Public Health Service (PHS) Evaluation Funds. In addition, the FY 2024 Budget request includes other mandatory funding proposals not cited here. This request is \$2.4 billion above the FY 2023 enacted level and prioritizes investments in cross-cutting functions and core capabilities to enhance the public health system at federal, state, and local levels. In addition to streamlining CDC's budget structure, the budget also includes several legislative authorities to allow CDC to function as a public health response agency more effectively and efficiently.

The FY 2024 Budget request includes—

- advancing public health core capabilities and cross-cutting support;
- preventing and mitigating the impact of infectious diseases; and
- empowering communities to protect mental health, particularly among youth, and preventing suicide, violence, and overdose.

To meet these goals, CDC will continue to build on recent response activities, incorporate lessons learned over the past three years, and integrate longstanding agency expertise in disease control and prevention to best serve the nation and protect against new, emerging, and known health threats.

# LEVERAGING THE FY 2024 BUDGET REQUEST TO ADVANCE CDC'S RESPONSE MISSION AND CAPABILITIES

The FY 2024 budget will help modernize the way CDC collects, analyzes, and shares data; improve the ability to forecast threats to health; improve protective measures for population groups most vulnerable to largely preventable deaths, hospitalizations, and infections, advance how we hire and train a workforce to meet everyday responsibilities and surge for emergencies; and bolster global health security. Our nation's ability to respond to the next public health crisis will depend on whether we invest in a public health system today that is highly functional, sensitive, and responsive to communities that are underserved, operating well on a day-to-day basis and able to ramp up to meet new threats in the future.

One year ago this month, CDC announced an effort to refine and modernize our structures, systems, and processes with particular focus on how to swiftly move from science and program to policy, and promptly operationalize guidance for the public. In August 2022, based on this review and other substantial internal and external input, the CDC Moving Forward initiative was launched to—

- share scientific findings and data faster;
- enhance laboratory science and quality;
- translate science into practical, easy to understand policy;
- prioritize public health communications;
- develop a workforce prepared for future emergencies CDC and nationwide; and
- promote results-based partnerships

In January 2023, we initiated a CDC reorganization, one of several foundational steps to achieve progress in the improvement areas outlined above. This reorganization aims to eliminate bureaucratic reporting layers, break down silos in the agency, promote foundational public health capabilities that incorporate health equity, and improve accountability at CDC. We are now implementing recommendations from Moving Forward, such as publishing critical scientific findings faster, streamlining our structure for more rapid decision making, and improving and disseminating our communications directly to the public. In addition to other FY 2024 budget proposals outlined below that support the Moving Forward initiative, the FY 2024 budget request includes increased funding for the Public Health Leadership and Support funding line to support policy, science, and communications at CDC.

CDC is also requesting additional funds to support CDC's Public Health Infrastructure and Capacity line for continued investment in health departments to effectively protect the health of their communities. With this funding, jurisdictions—along with funded partners who are providing technical assistance and support—will make critical investments in foundational capabilities, aligning with the Public Health National Center for Innovations framework, in the areas of assessment and surveillance, community partnership development, health equity, organizational competencies, policy development

and support, accountability and performance management, emergency preparedness and response, and communications including greater language access ensuring all communities receive credible scientific information.

With additional funds for Advancing Laboratory Science in the FY 2024 budget request, CDC will continue to implement agency-wide solutions to promote improved laboratory capacity—including shortening the development time for diagnostic tests and implementing a new Infectious Disease Test Review Board—improving the speed and quality of CDC laboratory test results.

In addition to funding initiatives, this proposal includes legislative authorities that allow CDC to be more responsive in the face of public health threats. These include authorities for recruiting and retaining public health professionals, lifting caps on overtime pay for employees working on response operations, providing danger pay adjustments to employees serving in high-risk environments, moving CDC's appropriation to a one account structure to enable the agency to access and utilize its resources to meet an urgent public health need, and collect necessary public health data more efficiently. The budget also includes a legislative proposal that would allow CDC to dedicate a small percentage of funding to support a cadre of response-ready staff for short- and long-term emergency details or deployments, who can recognize emerging threats and intervene before they become larger crises.

The FY 2024 budget also proposes a Vaccines for Adults (VFA) program that would begin to expand access to Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices (ACIP) recommended vaccines at no cost for uninsured individuals. While a public health infrastructure exists for children to receive recommended vaccines from their pediatricians, the current infrastructure for adults is not robust. Establishing a robust infrastructure for adult vaccination will build on the progress and investments made during COVID-19 to improve adult access to vaccines while supporting response readiness by reducing vaccination coverage disparities, improving outbreak control of vaccine-preventable diseases, and enhancing and maintaining the infrastructure needed for responding to future pandemics.

Finally, the budget includes mandatory funding for pandemic preparedness across HHS to transform the nation's capabilities to prepare for and respond rapidly and effectively to the next emerging health threat.

## **BUILDING READINESS THROUGH CROSS-CUTTING INITIATIVES**

CDC's surveillance systems are crucial for understanding and preventing the causes of disease, injury, and death that affect all Americans. These systems, and a dedicated workforce in every jurisdiction that operates them, help identify contaminants in food, water, soil, and air; infectious disease outbreaks in hospitals; the drivers of maternal and newborn mortality and how to address them; and whether antimicrobial resistance has reduced options for treatment of bacterial and fungal infections. To have a U.S. public health system that is quickly responsive to changes in health and can rapidly analyze and

communicate the latest data, the nation must continue to invest in public health surveillance.

#### CDC's Data Modernization Initiative

The Data Modernization Initiative (DMI) is a multi-year effort to make core public health data and surveillance infrastructure current with today's technology and build the systems for the future. Thanks to investments to date, the country is in a vastly different position for recognizing and responding to health threats than it was before the pandemic. The value of these gains—to gather, analyze, and share information for communities' use in decision making—cannot be overstated. DMI investments improved the efficiency of nearly every surveillance tool in use by state and counties around the country. Further investment in FY 2024 with annual resources as requested in the Budget will continue to enhance health security for every American and anticipate future public health data needs.

Americans are already benefitting from investments in data modernization, including through DMI and other efforts across numerous CDC programs. CDC will continue to improve public health with FY 2024 requested increases, including each of the following:

- Speeding up transmission of digital laboratory reports through the Electronic Laboratory Reporting (ELR) from laboratories to state and local public health departments, healthcare systems, and CDC.
- Increasing connectivity for public health departments to communicate with the National Notifiable Diseases Surveillance System.
- Advancing real-time syndromic surveillance using de-identified data from participating emergency departments.
- Advancing real-time, automated case reporting to health departments using electronic Case Reporting (eCR), including expanding use of eCRs from rural health clinics.
- Enabling earlier and more robust information about deaths in the United States by increasing interoperability of systems pulling data for the National Vital Statistics System.
- Bringing state-of-the art analytic and predictive capacity to Americans through the Center for Forecasting and Outbreak Analytics at CDC.
- Protecting patient safety through CDC's National Healthcare Safety Network.
- Reducing maternal deaths using information from Surveillance for Emerging Threats to Mothers and Babies Network (SET-NET).
- Advancing U.S. capacity for gathering and analyzing data by integrating federal, state, and local government and hospital system data through the Ready Response Enterprise Data Integration platform (formerly HHS Protect).

This funding, paired with a modernized data authority requested in the budget will support public health agencies at the federal, state, and local levels to share quality and timely data, while reducing burden on providers.

## **Building the Public Health Workforce of the Future**

Public health agencies at all levels require substantial changes to address the vulnerabilities highlighted by COVID-19. Local and state public health agencies and related organizations have lost thousands of workers in the past decade and need highly trained public health leaders who represent our nation's communities and populations at disproportionate risk for disease, and who have the requisite interdisciplinary skills and experience to execute effective public health initiatives. CDC's pipeline and training programs, though comparatively small relative to the overall public health workforce, serve a pivotal role in training the future leaders in public health. Our budget request includes funding and legislative proposals to boost internship and fellowship recruitment and participation, enable more deployments, allow noncompetitive conversions of fellows to permanent positions, and leverage existing resources to support additional student loan repayment as a recruitment and retention incentive.

#### EFFORTS TO STOP THE SPREAD OF INFECTIOUS DISEASES

## **Emerging Infectious Diseases and Quarantine**

As the world sees an increase in newly emerging pathogens and responses become increasingly complex, CDC requests an increase in funding for Emerging Infectious Diseases to allow funds to be used for novel pathogens for which a funding line does not yet exist. CDC is a global leader in studying and responding to emerging pathogens due to its groundbreaking research and state-of-the-art laboratories, public health expertise, and collaborative networks with state, local, and tribal health departments that quickly identify and characterize emerging pathogens and allow for coordination of multistate investigations and responses. Increased funding for Emerging Infectious Diseases will provide resources needed to harness these unique capabilities in the face of uncertainty.

The requested increase for quarantine activities will be used to scale-up migration systems that protect against future international outbreaks and pandemics. CDC will sustain investments made with COVID-19 supplemental funds to support innovative solutions that focus on a modernized and flexible traveler management program aimed to engage with travelers before, during, and after travel.

### **Antimicrobial Resistance**

Antimicrobial resistance happens when germs like bacteria and fungi develop the ability to defeat the drugs designed to kill them. Resistant infections can be difficult, and sometimes impossible, to treat. Antimicrobial resistance is an urgent public health threat. With increased funding requested in the budget, CDC will expand state and local capacity to detect and prevent emerging and existing threats through strengthened antibiotic stewardship data collection and quality improvement efforts, improve data sets addressing health equity and disparities, and expand the Global Antimicrobial Resistance Laboratory and Response Network. Investments will provide support to implement and

achieve the goals under the <u>National Action Plan for Combating Antibiotic-Resistant</u> Bacteria (CARB), 2020-2025.

# **Vaccine-preventable Diseases**

Vaccines continue to be one of our most effective tools to protect health. For example, during the 2021-2022 flu season, flu vaccination prevented 1.8 million flu-related illnesses, one million medical visits, 22,000 hospitalizations, and nearly 1,000 deaths in the United States. Recent reductions in vaccine coverage and confidence across the world create vulnerabilities to health security at home and abroad. The budget includes significant investments to support the immunization infrastructure throughout the United States. This includes modernizing immunization information systems, implementing new strategies for vaccine equity, building vaccine confidence, expanding the scientific evidence base, and enhancing support in human papilloma virus (HPV) vaccination efforts, which aligns with the Biden-Harris Administration's Cancer Moonshot initiative.

The budget also proposes an expansion of the Vaccines for Children program to include all children under age 19 enrolled in the Children's Health Insurance Program, and as I mentioned earlier, a complementary system for adults—the Vaccines for Adults program—to begin to expand access to vaccines recommended by the ACIP at no cost for uninsured adults.

The budget also includes an increase for the Global Immunization program to achieve priority goals including shifting children out of zero-dose status, increasing life-course vaccination, preventing and mitigating large outbreaks, which can cross borders, and working toward essential service targets globally.

## **Ending the HIV Epidemic**

The budget includes an increase to advance our work, in partnership with other parts of HHS, to end the HIV epidemic. In FY 2024, CDC will expand innovative and successful interventions, implement approaches that integrate health equity into the entire HIV prevention portfolio, test novel service delivery models designed to increase access to prevention services, and strengthen engagement of community-based organizations in implementing the Ending the HIV Epidemic in the U.S. initiative.

# MOVING BEYOND INFECTIOUS DISEASE THREATS TO PROTECT THE NATION'S HEALTH

CDC works collaboratively with state, tribal, local, and territorial health departments to bring science and interventions to all communities. Working at the community level promotes healthy living, helps prevent injury and chronic diseases, and brings the greatest health benefits to the greatest number of people in need, while investing in local communities and addressing the drivers of health disparities seen in this country. Greater engagement of enduring community institutions such as faith-based organizations, civic groups, and others have been instrumental in embedding health promotion and disease prevention as community values.

## **Protecting Americans from Environmental Health Threats**

CDC's budget request for Environmental Health Activities within the National Center for Environmental Health will support expanded laboratory and health investigation efforts under the Cancer Moonshot Initiative and provide additional funding to health departments to address environmental hazards and health. CDC programs funded under the Environmental Health Activities budget line support core environmental health programs, workforce capacity, and research that protect Americans from emerging and everyday environmental health threats wherever they live. CDC and the Agency for Toxic Substances and Disease Registry employees work with state officials in assessing how environmental exposures affect health, such as evaluating Hawaii's drinking water and analyzing chemical exposures in the aftermath of the train derailment in East Palestine, Ohio.

These programs are critical for ensuring environmental public health practitioners at state, tribal, local, and territorial health departments have the resources, tools, and evidence-based guidance to detect, prevent, and control environmental public health hazards, including threats from wildfires, hurricanes, or other extreme weather events.

CDC's Childhood Lead Poisoning Prevention program focuses on primary prevention of lead exposure as well as detection, early intervention, and support for those children already demonstrating elevated blood lead levels. The requested funding increase in the budget will enable CDC to add another 38 grants for a total of 110 grants nationwide. Data from CDC's nationally representative National Health and Nutrition Examination Survey (NHANES) show that children's mean blood lead levels are going down over time, and continued support for this program would allow resources and strategies to be directed to those children with highest exposures and at greatest risk to further these gains.

## **Advancing Efforts to Address Cancer Prevention and Control**

The experience of cancer —getting a cancer diagnosis, surviving cancer, or losing someone to cancer — has touched virtually every American family. The Biden-Harris Administration's Cancer Moonshot initiative seeks to cut the death rate from cancer by at least 50 percent over the next 25 years and improve the experience of people and their families living with and surviving cancer. The funding requested in the budget builds on investments CDC has made in a comprehensive, coordinated cancer prevention and control portfolio for more than 30 years. Funded programs will demonstrate how proven strategies advance health equity, such as Patient Navigator programs, and build community capacity in cancer prevention and control. Outcomes include improving the provision of clinical preventive services, facilitating planning among partners to promote evidence-based strategies in communities, and improving cancer surveillance. The FY 2024 budget increases support for cancer prevention and control programs across CDC, in addition to tobacco prevention, HPV prevention, and analysis of cancer clusters related to environmental concerns.

## The Built Environment and Food Security

The characteristics of places and resources where people live, learn, work, and play have an enormous impact on the likelihood of achieving healthy outcomes. CDC has funded projects in jurisdictions to develop one-year accelerator plans addressing key aspects of CDC's priority social determinants of health (SDOH): the built environment, food security, clinical-community linkages, social connectedness, tobacco-free policies, and healthcare access and quality. Funds requested in the FY 2024 budget for CDC's SDOH program will be used to implement and evaluate action plans and to build the evidence base for interventions through applied research, data collection, and surveillance.

In support of the White House National Strategy on Hunger, Nutrition, and Health, the FY 2024 Budget includes funding to expand the State Physical Activity and Nutrition (SPAN) program to all 50 states, the District of Columbia, and 14 territories. The SPAN program works with jurisdictions to implement evidence-based strategies to reduce chronic diseases by improving physical activity and nutrition. Through this program, the Active People, Healthy Nation initiative makes physical activity safe and accessible for all by implementing state and community-level policies and activities that connect pedestrian, bicycle, or transit opportunities to everyday destinations.

## **Combating Maternal Mortality**

CDC released data visualization presenting national-level provisional counts of maternal deaths based on a current flow of mortality data in the National Vital Statistics

System. The maternal mortality rate for 2021 was 32.9 deaths per 100,000 live births, compared with a rate of 23.8 in 2020 and 20.1 in 2019; this increase was more profound among people of color and that the COVID-19 pandemic exacerbated factors associated with maternal mortality such as lack of access to care. The data visualization dashboard is updated quarterly and show that the rates are declining in 2022. However, underlying conditions that result in racial and ethnic disparities need to be addressed. The Biden-Harris Administration continue to support efforts to reduce maternal mortality.

The FY 2024 Budget includes an increase for CDC programs aimed at reducing maternal mortality. Specifically, additional funding for the Maternal Mortality Review Committees will promote representative community engagement to further expand support for all states and territories and increasing support for tribes. Additional funding will also be directed to expand Perinatal Quality Collaboratives to every state, support community engagement in maternal mortality prevention, and increase support for the Pregnancy Risk Assessment Monitoring System. CDC will also support tools to help states develop coordinated regional systems to help those at high risk of complications receive care at a birth facility that is best prepared to meet their health needs.

#### PROMOTING MENTAL HEALTH AND ADDRESSING VIOLENCE

Mental health is an important part of overall health at every stage of life, from childhood and adolescence through adulthood, and includes our emotional, psychological, and

social well-being. CDC promotes and supports efforts to improve mental health, especially among youth and adolescents, and prevents violence in communities.

## **Protecting Children**

In the FY 2024 Budget, CDC requests an increase in funding to expand the number of states implementing strategies that have been proven to reduce adverse childhood experiences (ACEs) and promote positive ones. Through the Essentials for Childhood: Preventing Adversity through Data to Action program, CDC will increase investments in surveillance and research activities for the prevention of ACEs.

CDC's Healthy Schools Program plays a unique role in bringing together the education and public health sectors to support physical education, physical activity and healthy nutrition, management of disabilities and chronic conditions, emotional well-being, and healthy and supportive school environments. In FY 2024, CDC plans to use its increase in funding as requested in the budget to implement the Healthy Schools program in all states.

In addition, the budget includes additional funds to promote adolescent mental health through CDC's What Works in Schools program. The program works to strengthen schools' prevention activities. Using data from multiple large-scale surveys of schoolaged children and adolescents, CDC developed guidance and curricula that have substantially reduced risk behaviors, experience of violence, substance use, and poor mental health among students. Increased funding as requested in the budget will be used to expand support for up to 75 of the nation's largest local education agencies to implement these proven practices and focus specifically on school connectedness in the wake of COVID-19.

# **Preventing Violence**

Violence is a serious and growing problem in the United States affecting people in all stages of life. CDC is the nation's leading authority on violence and injury prevention. The FY 2024 Budget would create a Community Violence Intervention (CVI) program within CDC that would support community-based organizations in implementing proven public health strategies that reduce violence. With CVI resources requested in the FY 2024 President's Budget, CDC will fund cities and communities demonstrating the greatest need for intervention and programming to stem the tide of community violence. Research, surveillance, and program evaluation efforts will be prioritized to emphasize those interventions and populations where evidence strongly suggests that public health approaches will reduce the burden of community violence.

Once again, we are reminded of the terrible toll that firearm injuries take on our young people. Injuries are the most common cause of death among children, adolescents, and young adults between one and 24 years of age in the United States. For more than 60 years, motor vehicle crashes were the leading cause of injury-related death among this age group. However, beginning in 2017, firearm-related injuries surpassed motor vehicle

crashes as the leading cause of death from injury. 1 CDC will continue to fund research to identify the most effective ways to prevent firearm-related injuries and deaths. As requested in the budget, CDC plans to use increased funding for firearm injury and mortality prevention research to provide additional funding opportunities to support R01 research grants that improve understanding of firearm injury; inform the development of innovative and promising prevention strategies; and rigorously evaluate the effectiveness of strategies to keep individuals, families, schools, and communities safe from firearm-related injuries, deaths, and crime. CDC will fund additional research grants to support new investigators and will focus on improving collection and dissemination of timely data on firearm-related deaths, nonfatal firearm injuries, and behavioral issues related to firearms such as safe storage. This will include the expansion of the Firearm Injury Surveillance Through Emergency Rooms (FASTER) program to as many states as possible.

In the FY 2024 Budget, CDC requests an increase to build and enhance the primary prevention capacity of state, territorial, and tribal sexual assault coalitions for rape prevention. This will complement work funded through existing rape prevention funding opportunities.

In the FY 2024 Budget, CDC requests additional funding for the National Violent Death Reporting System (NVDRS) to implement and maintain the system, monitor and report data, and use data to inform prevention efforts to save lives. CDC will continue to increase the use of NVDRS data by characterizing manner of death and identifying key populations at risk for violence for further study.

In the FY 2024 Budget, CDC also requests an increase for expanding the reach of the Domestic Violence Prevention Enhancement and Leadership Through Alliances (DELTA) program, which aims to decrease risk factors in communities that may lead to intimate partner violence and to increase protective factors that prevent it.

## **Preventing Overdose**

The opioid epidemic has shattered families, claimed lives, and ravaged communities across the nation—and the COVID-19 pandemic has only deepened this crisis. Addressing the current overdose epidemic remains a priority for CDC. The Biden-Harris Administration's strategy brings together surveillance, prevention, treatment, recovery, law enforcement, interdiction, and source-country efforts to address the continuum of challenges facing this country due to drug use. CDC's unique role in preventing overdose stems from its ability to gather data on the circumstances surrounding overdose deaths, which states use to spot trends and understand risk factors leading to these deaths.

DOI: 10.1056/NEJMp2200169

11

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup> N Engl J Med 2022; 386:1485-1487

CDC's budget request for Opioid Overdose Prevention and Surveillance funding will support integration of state and local prevention and response efforts, provide support for providers and health systems prevention (including use of prescription drug monitoring programs as a clinical decision support tool), enhance partnerships with public safety and first responders, establish and improve linkages to medications for opioid use disorder and other supportive services through harm reduction activities, and empower individuals to make informed choices. These activities support multiple initiatives included in the Office of National Drug Control Policy (ONDCP) Policy Priorities and the National Drug Control Strategy.<sup>2</sup>

## **Preventing Suicide**

In 2020, 46,000 people died by suicide in the United States; this is one death every 11 minutes. Multiple factors contribute to suicide at the individual, relationship, community, and societal levels, including issues related to substance misuse, physical health, jobs, money, interpersonal violence, stigma, and access to lethal means among people at risk. The goal of suicide prevention is to reduce factors that increase risk and encourage factors that promote resilience. CDC's vision is, "no lives lost to suicide." CDC uses data, science, and partnerships to identify and implement effective suicide prevention strategies. The FY 2024 budget requests an increase to expand the Suicide Prevention Program to all 50 states, the District of Columbia, and 18 tribal and territorial communities, as well as other nongovernmental organizations and university research programs to reduce suicide.

#### **CONCLUSION**

CDC is taking the necessary steps through our Moving Forward initiative to drive needed changes in the operations, incentives, and structure of the organization to address costly and longstanding challenges and fully meet the public health needs of the American public today and in the future. Funding levels included in the FY 2024 budget request will enable CDC to better prepare for, and equitably respond to, the next emerging public health threat, and to continue to protect Americans from existing threats.

We will continue to apply lessons learned and advance bipartisan solutions to be better prepared for future public health challenges. Congressional action to support these budget and legislative proposals will improve how CDC responds to future emerging threats and support the agency's modern-day mission.

I look forward to working together to implement the solutions that will make this agency—the work of which is so critical to America's health—and our partners at the state, Tribal, local, and territorial level, better prepared for what comes next.

Thank you, and I look forward to your questions.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup> https://www.whitehouse.gov/wp-content/uploads/2022/04/National-Drug-Control-2022Strategy.pdf