Washington, D.C. – Yesterday, the Trump Administration released the summary of its FY20 budget proposal, entitled, “A Budget for a Better America.” IHEP President Michelle Asha Cooper, Ph.D. released the following statement:

“The Trump Administration’s FY20 budget proposes dramatic, damaging, and short-sighted cuts to the Department of Education. By disinvesting in students – especially low- and moderate-income students, it fails to appropriately address the needs of today’s college go-ers.

“The Pell Grant program is the cornerstone of our federal financial aid system and has helped millions of low- and moderate-income students realize their dream of a college education. But the program, and the students it serves, are in desperate need of renewed investment. The purchasing power of Pell Grants is at its lowest level in more than 40 years. By failing to increase the maximum Pell award, the Administration’s proposed FY20 budget would worsen this trend, while also putting future students at risk by cutting $2 billion from the Pell reserve fund. At the same time, the proposal eliminates the Supplemental Educational Opportunity Grant and loan subsidies on Stafford loans and halves funding for the Federal Work Study program – three critical sources of funding for students with financial need.

“In addition to its harmful impact on college affordability, the President’s budget would also hamper states’ efforts to improve student outcomes. By zeroing out funding for Statewide Longitudinal Data Systems, states may be left with insufficient resources to inform student choices and to support evidence-based decision-making in their states and local communities.

“We urge Congress to reject these harmful cuts that would deepen the educational and economic divide between the haves and the have-nots. Instead, policymakers should invest meaningfully in policies that help more low- and moderate-income students pursue their dreams and reach their full potential.”