



Advancing innovation to save lives

March 17, 2015

The Honorable Thad Cochran
Chairman
Senate Appropriations Committee
113 Dirksen Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Barbara Mikulski
Vice Chairwoman
Senate Appropriations Committee
503 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Roy Blunt
Chairman
Senate Appropriations Subcommittee on
Labor, Health and Human Services,
Education, and Related Agencies
260 Russell Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Patty Murray
Ranking Member
Senate Appropriations Subcommittee on
Labor, Health and Human Services,
Education, and Related Agencies
154 Russell Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Members of the Appropriations Committee:

The undersigned organizations—members of, or partners with, the Global Health Technologies Coalition (GHTC), a group of 25 nonprofit organizations working to raise awareness about the role of health technologies in saving lives in the developing world—are writing to express our gratitude for your support of global health research and development (R&D) programs. We recognize that you face many challenging decisions about budget expenditures during these difficult economic times.

US investments in R&D for vaccines, microbicides, drugs, devices, diagnostics, and other tools have led to significant breakthroughs in addressing diseases and health conditions that afflict people living in some of the poorest countries around the world. **For fiscal year (FY) 2016, we respectfully urge you to sustain and protect funding for R&D for global health products and innovations at agencies within the US Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) by providing at least \$32 billion in funding for the National Institutes of Health (NIH), and robust funding for the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), with \$469 million for the Center for Global Health and \$669 million for the National Center for Emerging Zoonotic and Infectious Diseases (NCEZID).**

In today's globalized world, the health of Americans is interdependent with the health of populations abroad. Health threats know no borders, and protecting the well-being of Americans now requires a global effort. Global health research conducted by US agencies not only improves people's lives around the world—it is also a smart economic investment for the United States that drives job creation, spurs business activity, and benefits academic

institutions. Many diseases are only a plane ride away, or in some instances, reoccurring in the United States; it is therefore critical to our nation's public health that we work to combat these deadly diseases.

National Institutes of Health

The **NIH** carries out a wide variety of global health research activities—through the National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases and the Fogarty International Center—that make the United States a leader in research globally. Dr. Francis Collins has named global health one of the agency's five top priorities. **Recent NIH global health research activities include:**

- Supporting studies in the search for new HIV/AIDS interventions, including evidence that certain HIV treatments can also prevent the transmission of the HIV virus.
- Participating in the basic research that led to the development of the first-ever microbicide gel effective in preventing HIV/AIDS.
- Conducting basic and preclinical research that provides the foundation for new product discovery and development and supporting and conducting early stage clinical trials of promising products.
- Developing the in-country research capacity of developing world partners. The Fogarty International Center supports global health research at over 100 US universities and research centers around the world.
- Developing tools to combat neglected diseases, including vaccines for dengue fever and trachoma, as well as new drugs to treat malaria and tuberculosis.
- Contributing to the clinical evaluation of new treatment and prevention strategies for neglected diseases, including coordinating the Tuberculosis Trials Consortium—a global collaboration of researchers from CDC, domestic and international public health departments, academic medical centers, and Veterans Administration medical centers.

While we recognize and are grateful for the Committee's work to increase FY 2015 NIH funding levels, we remain concerned about the general downward funding trend. As you are aware, increases in FY 2015 funding are still below pre-sequester levels, even before inflation is taken into consideration. Focusing on the earliest stages of global health R&D, the NIH's role is imperative for ensuring that lifesaving products are able to make it to the later stages of development and eventually become available to the communities who need them.

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention

The **CDC** also makes significant contributions to global health research. The CDC's ability to investigate and respond to disease outbreaks, such as the 2014 Ebola Virus Disease

outbreak in West Africa, is essential to protecting citizens both at home and abroad. The work of its scientists has led to major advances against devastating diseases, including the eradication of smallpox and early identification of AIDS. Dr. Thomas Frieden has also named global health one of his top priorities for the agency, and the **CDC continues to make an impact on global health through critical research activities, including:**

- Monitoring and tracking infectious diseases worldwide.
- Providing the critical intelligence needed to effectively implement control and prevention programs for these diseases.
- Supporting researchers by directing their efforts toward areas with the greatest potential for benefit.
- Alerting researchers when new trends or disease strains emerge.
- Monitoring diseases domestically to make the public aware of an emergence of an infectious disease from abroad.
- Developing diagnostic tools to accurately identify global diseases, including the bubonic plague.

The efforts of the Center for Global Health and NCEZID are critical to protecting lives and must be continued. Past investments in research by the United States have resulted in enormous strides against diseases such as rubella and polio. Ongoing investments in the development of new vaccines, drugs, microbicides, and other tools have the potential to greatly accelerate efforts to combat HIV/AIDS, tuberculosis, malaria, diarrheal disease, pneumonia, and other lesser-known diseases such as leishmaniasis, dengue fever, schistosomiasis, hookworm, sleeping sickness, and Chagas disease, as well as to help prevent maternal and reproductive health challenges.

This request also takes into account the increases necessary for the CDC's role in the *National Strategy for Combating Antibiotic Resistant Bacteria*, which could have tremendous lifesaving potential in fighting infectious diseases like drug-resistant tuberculosis, as well as increases for the CDC's Global Health Security Agenda, which will prioritize global capacity building for responding to future outbreaks and global health risks.

In these times of fiscal constraint, we understand the responsibility Congress has to ensure that American dollars are being spent wisely. Investments in global health research improve the lives of people around the world, while at the same time creating jobs and spurring economic growth at home. **An estimated 64 cents of every US dollar invested in global health R&D benefits US-based researchers.** Today's investments in global health innovations will ultimately lead to returns on investment, both in lives and money saved, equally far more valuable than our initial outlays.

We must sustain and bolster the role of the United States in developing new global health tools to save lives and ensure US leadership in today's global society. We stand ready to work with you on these important issues to achieve our nation's global health goals. Please do not

hesitate to contact Erin Will Morton, coalition director, at ewmorton@ghtcoalition.org or (202) 822-0033 if you have questions or need any additional information.

Thank you for your leadership.

Sincerely,

