



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 Lindsey Graham
Chairman
Senate Appropriations Subcommittee on
State, Foreign Operations, and Related
Programs
290 Russell Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Patrick J. Leahy
Ranking Member
Senate Appropriations Subcommittee on
State, Foreign Operations, and Related
Programs
437 Russell Senate 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 the **fiscal year (FY) 2016 appropriations process, we respectfully urge the Subcommittee to sustain and protect funding for research to develop new global health products and innovations by funding the Global Health Programs account under the State Department and the US Agency for International Development (USAID) at \$10.078 billion, and to fully fund each disease or population-specific program under this account, while also honoring US commitments to multilateral global health and development programs.**

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. In today's globalized society, many diseases are only a plane ride away, or in some instances, reoccurring in the United States.

As you know, 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. Therefore, it is critical to our nation's public health that we work to combat these deadly diseases and health challenges. Spending less than one-half of one percent of the federal budget, USAID works around the world to achieve these goals by saving lives in developing countries and strengthening US relations with its allies.

Today's investments in global health innovations to prevent and treat diseases in the developing world such as Ebola, extensively drug-resistant tuberculosis (XDR-TB), malaria, and neglected tropical diseases (NTDs) will mean millions of future lives saved. One of USAID's comparative advantages is that it can play a unique role in R&D by funding late-stage research and product development appropriate for the low-resource settings, where they will be used. **We applaud the efforts that USAID has made in fostering innovation in health technologies, including:**

- Partnering across government agencies and among private-sector partners to identify breakthrough innovations to combat the current Ebola epidemic and better prepare us for future outbreaks.
- Collaborating with private sector partners across the country and around the world. Through product development partnerships—a unique form of public-private partnership designed to develop and introduce new tools for neglected diseases—USAID supports research to improve health conditions around the world. One success of this model has been the development of a low-cost meningitis vaccine, specifically designed for the millions of people in African countries who are at risk for this deadly disease each year. This vaccine is having real world lifesaving implications, and to date, more than 215 million people have been vaccinated since its introduction in 2010.
- Another example of USAID growing partnerships is its coordination with the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, Grand Challenges Canada, the government of Norway, and others through the Saving Lives at Birth research program, focused on developing lifesaving innovations for mothers and newborns.
- Supporting research to develop safe, effective, accessible, and acceptable tools for use in the developing world to prevent HIV—including microbicides based on antiretroviral drugs, which have shown the potential to prevent HIV infection in women—and HIV vaccines.
- Funding the development of new anti-malaria treatments, including Tafenoquine, a drug candidate that is currently in Phase III clinical trials and is a potential single-dose treatment for the radical cure of *P. vivax* malaria.
- Playing a key role in the global effort to fight tuberculosis by supporting research to develop new therapeutics and providing expertise on implementation and scale up of the products that are ultimately licensed.
- Supporting the development of creative strategies and tools to deliver medicines to those who need them.

Ongoing investments in the development of new vaccines, drugs, microbicides, and other tools have the potential to greatly accelerate efforts to address HIV/AIDS, tuberculosis, malaria, diarrheal disease, and pneumonia, as well as improve maternal and reproductive health. Funding for these technologies generally flows through individual USAID global health accounts, and therefore robust funding of global health programs allows investment in innovation. Continued investment throughout USAID's global health accounts is needed, particularly in areas where current gaps exist, such as support for research into new tuberculosis vaccines, as well as technologies to combat maternal and child health challenges. Such investments can ensure that the progress made in the past several years, thanks to increased support from the United States, is not reversed.

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 simultaneously 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 bolster and sustain 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 that are essential to achieving 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 very much for your leadership.

Sincerely,



