

Global Health Technologies Coalition Outside Witness Testimony for the Record
Subcommittee on Defense Addressing the Department of War
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On behalf of the Global Health Technologies Coalition (GHTC), a group of more than 50 nonprofit organizations, academic institutions, and aligned businesses advancing policies to accelerate the creation of new drugs, vaccines, diagnostics, and other tools that bring healthy lives within reach for all people, I am providing testimony to we respectfully urge the Committee to sustain and protect funding for research to develop and promote access to new global health technologies at DOD within the Defense Health Program and the Congressionally Directed Medical Research Program (CDMRP) by requesting that malaria and tuberculosis (TB) are included in CDMRP. The recommendations outlined herein reflect the need expressed by our members working in the United States and around the globe to develop new and improved technologies for the world's most pressing health issues and ensure national and global health security. We appreciate the Committee's historic bipartisan support for global health, particularly for continued research and development (R&D) to advance new drugs, vaccines, diagnostics, and other tools for long-standing and emerging health challenges.

In addition to protecting service members, DOD research programs also benefit global health. These incidental benefits have no additional cost to DOD, but have the potential to advance other US government priorities and hasten innovation. Millions of people die every year because we do not have the technologies to save them. The United States, as a biomedical research powerhouse, can change history through relatively small public investments. As an example, the US government's multi-agency Operation Warp Speed supported the development of four globally distributed Food and Drug Administration-approved or authorized COVID-19 vaccines. This helped to save 14 million lives in the first year of the pandemic. Additionally, the vaccines created an estimated \$895 billion of savings in direct healthcare costs between December 2020 and March 2022.

Stronger global health R&D positions the United States to be better prepared for the next pandemic, saves lives, and builds research capacity both at home and abroad, especially as we work to address the current Ebola outbreak in the Democratic Republic of the Congo and Uganda. Public funding for global health research is a strategic investment that strengthens our economy, supports US leadership in innovation, and keeps Americans safe. We cannot afford to fall behind in this area as other nations, including China, continue to expand their investments in global health innovation.

In 2024, tuberculosis (TB) claimed the lives of **1.23 million people** worldwide, **1.3 million people** were newly infected with HIV, and **282 million people** were infected with malaria. In 2021, at least **1.14 million people** died from bacterial antimicrobial resistance (AMR), and **4.71 million deaths** were associated with bacterial AMR. Drug resistance is currently a major threat to malaria control and elimination. More than **1 billion people** worldwide are affected by neglected tropical diseases (NTDs), a group of 21 diseases caused by various pathogens. Women and children in low-resource settings are among the most vulnerable population groups.

As we look toward the future, we cannot afford to wait for the emergence of pandemic threats with the potential to match or exceed the disruption of COVID-19 to pursue the discovery and development of new tools to protect us. Without sustained investment and congressional

leadership, these numbers will only grow—with significant global health security consequences, both globally and here at home.

To develop the innovations and technologies that we need to defeat these diseases and to prevent future pandemics, the US government needs to sustainably increase its investments in global health research programs. Public funding is critical for this sector because, despite their lifesaving uses, commercial incentives to invest in R&D are limited—either because the affected populations have limited purchasing power or, in the case of emerging threats, no viable market yet exists.

Furthermore, the return on investment for the United States is substantial. Data from the past 16 years show that investments in global health R&D led to economic gains in the United States and in partner countries. As told in a recent analysis conducted by a partnership between Impact Global Health and GHTC, between 2007 and 2022, \$46 billion in US government investment in global health R&D led to \$104 billion in economic activity and the creation of more than 600,000 jobs countrywide. In addition, follow-on effects from US-backed innovations are projected to generate \$255 billion for the US economy.

Infectious disease research protects the lives of our soldiers and millions of people around the world, fosters goodwill that enhances our national security, and promotes economic growth. In this moment of transition and reflection on our health and research infrastructure, it is more important than ever to preserve the progress we've made and invest boldly in the innovations of tomorrow. Global health R&D is a smart, strategic investment in a safer, healthier, and more prosperous America.

Support for the scale-up of proven products is vital and should be encouraged. At the same time, significant gaps remain in the tools needed to address persistent and emerging global health challenges, many of which require sustained investment in earlier stages of R&D. Universities, academic medical centers, and nonprofit product development partnerships have long played a central role in this pipeline, advancing affordable, fit-for-purpose solutions designed for low-resource settings. Ensuring these actors remain fully engaged in the U.S. global health R&D ecosystem will be critical to maintaining American leadership and delivering durable health impact.

We encourage Congress to include TB and malaria in their list of diseases covered by the CDMRP's Peer Reviewed Medical Research Program (PRMRP). Doing so will allow funding for groundbreaking research and product development on these diseases, which could help advance new therapies, especially for drug-resistant infections that are driving the global antimicrobial resistance crisis. Protecting our service members from TB and malaria is critical, given the global footprint of the US military. The CDMRP provides researchers with a unique opportunity to accelerate innovative solutions to better protect our service members and their families abroad as they serve our country. Dismantling the PRMRP and the CDMRP would undermine efforts to protect those serving abroad from serious global disease threats.

It is clearer than ever that increases in investment for global health innovation are critical. There is still much that can be done—and must be done—to protect Americans' health and security from the current Ebola outbreak and future pandemics. GHTC urges the Committee to continue to direct the Department of War to prioritize research and development as core pillars of its global health mission and service member protection.

Thank you.