

February 10, 2017

Senator Thad Cochran
Chairman
Senate Committee on Appropriations
S-128, US Capitol
Washington DC 20510

Senator Pat Leahy
Ranking Member
Senate Committee on Appropriations
S-146A, US Capitol
Washington DC 20510

Representative Rodney Frelinghuysen
Chairman
House Committee on Appropriations
H-305, US Capitol
Washington DC 20515

Representative Nita Lowey
Ranking Member
House Committee on Appropriations
1016 Longworth House Office Building
Washington DC 20515

Dear Chairman Cochran, Ranking Member Leahy, Chairman Frelinghuysen and Ranking Member Lowey,

On behalf of our organizations representing patients, health care providers, public health, and businesses, we urge you to include ample funding to combat the Zika virus in the Fiscal Year 2018 appropriations bills.

Zika virus continues to pose a major threat to the health and well-being of our nation's pregnant women and infants. While transmission rates are low here during winter in the northern hemisphere, Zika is expected to resurge when mosquitos emerge this spring. Local transmission is still occurring in the Southern part of the country, most notably in Texas, where a pregnant woman was recently infected. Additionally, Americans continue to travel to areas with active local transmission, such as the Caribbean, where they may become infected. And while federal funding has allowed for tremendous progress on a Zika vaccine, it is still at least two years away from being widely available.

The Continuing Appropriations and Military Construction, Veterans Affairs, and Related Agencies Appropriations Act, 2017, and Zika Response and Preparedness Act took vital steps to provide resources to prevent, diagnose and treat cases of Zika virus infection and its health consequences. These funds are making possible rapid progress toward a vaccine, critical studies on the natural history of Zika and its health effects, and preparations for more effective vector control this summer. However, this single infusion of funds will not be sufficient to sustain the long-term effort needed to combat Zika.

Fighting Zika effectively will require a multi-faceted approach. The National Institutes of Health needs continued funding to develop Zika vaccines and to study the disease. The Centers for Diseases Control and Prevention must have funding to conduct and improve Zika diagnostics and to support state prevention efforts, including vector control. State, local and tribal governments must have appropriate resources for their work, including enhanced laboratory, epidemiology and surveillance capacity, continued vector control, and public awareness and education campaigns. We look forward to working with you to ensure that each of these key strategies is funded appropriately.

Our organizations are currently working to develop more specific requests for Zika funding in Fiscal Year 2018, which we will convey to you in the coming weeks. In the meantime, if we can be of additional assistance, please contact Jaimie Vickery, Director of Federal Affairs at the March of Dimes, at 202-659-1800 or jvickery@marchofdimes.org.

Sincerely,

AABB

American Academy of Family Physicians

American Academy of Pediatrics

American Association for Clinical Chemistry

American Association for Pediatric Ophthalmology and Strabismus

American Association of Colleges of Pharmacy

American College of Nurse-Midwives

American College of Preventive Medicine

American Congress of Obstetricians and Gynecologists

American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees (AFSCME)

American Public Health Association

American Society for Reproductive Medicine

American Society of Tropical Medicine and Hygiene

Association for Professionals in Infection Control and Epidemiology

Association of American Veterinary Medical Colleges

Association of Maternal & Child Health Programs

Association of Public Health Laboratories

Association of Schools and Programs of Public Health

Association of University Centers on Disabilities

Black Women's Health Imperative

Children's Environmental Health Network

Commissioned Officers Association of the US. Public Health Service, Inc.

Cooley's Anemia Foundation

Council of State and Territorial Epidemiologists

Family Voices

GBS|CIDP Foundation International

Genetic Alliance

Grifols

Healthcare Ready

Infectious Diseases Society of America

March of Dimes

National Association of Community Health Centers

National Association of County and City Health Officials

National Birth Defects Prevention Network

National Environmental Health Association

National Foundation for Infectious Diseases

National Hispanic Medical Association

National Organization for Rare Disorders

Novavax

OraSure Technologies

Organization of Teratology Information Specialists

Public Health Institute

Racial and Ethnic Health Disparities Coalition

Research!America

RESOLVE: The National Infertility Association

Society for Maternal-Fetal Medicine

Spina Bifida Association

Teratology Society

The Arc of the United States

The Association of Women's Health, Obstetric and Neonatal Nurses (AWHONN)

The National Campaign to Prevent Teen and Unplanned Pregnancy

The Society for Healthcare Epidemiology of America

Trisomy 18 Foundation

Trust for America's Health