

19 March 2020

The Honorable Nancy Pelosi
Speaker of the House of Representatives
U.S House of Representatives
H-232 US. Capitol
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Mitch McConnell
Senate Majority Leader
United States Senate
S-230 US Capitol
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Leader Kevin McCarthy
Republican Leader
U.S. House of Representatives
H-204, US. Capitol
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Charles Schumer
Democratic Leader
United States Senate
S-221 U.S. Capitol
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Leaders McConnell and Schumer, Speaker Pelosi and Leader McCarthy:

We urge Congress to include a significant and sustained global health security investment for the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) in the next emergency supplemental package to better protect the homeland by immediately strengthening our global health defense. These funds are critical to detect and respond to pandemic threats before they reach our shores.

With increased investment, we can both tamp down the COVID-19 pandemic and drive down the risk of future epidemics and pandemics. Countries around the world will find threats faster, stop them sooner, and prevent them whenever possible. Only when countries are stronger there can we be safer here.

As we are currently witnessing with the COVID-19 pandemic, diseases do not respect borders, and the world is more interconnected than ever. CDC and USAID through the Global Health Security Agenda, which built on the CDC's long-term Global Disease Detection and Response work and USAID's work in animal health, and in partnership with the Department of Defense, have established programs to train frontline health workers, establish disease tracking networks, and support rapid response, including through emergency operations centers. These programs have been helpful countries stop deadly outbreaks such as MERS, Lassa Fever, the DRC Ebola outbreak, and others before they reach the United States. We must expand those efforts and do much more to keep Americans safer from health threats.

We applaud the initial commitment Congress has made to addressing coronavirus through the first emergency supplemental by including \$300 million in global health funding at the CDC, and we are encouraged by the Administration's request for \$3 billion submitted to Congress on March 18, 2020. However, unless funds are specifically set aside for global health security in this latest appropriation, we risk leaving ourselves open to a longer and worse COVID pandemic and leaving our country's defenses down against future health threats. To protect our nation's health security, we call on appropriators to invest **at least \$1 billion a year for global health security funding at the CDC.**

This strong and sustained \$1 billion per year investment at the CDC specifically for global health protection would have significant benefits if properly sustained for 5 years. With this investment CDC could:

- **Support 38 of the most vulnerable countries in the world with a population of more than 900 million, to fill critical gaps so they can find, stop and prevent disease outbreaks.** These countries have major health security gaps. We are only safe when these gaps are closed.
- **Train more than 3,800 advanced, 7,600 basic, and 30,000 frontline disease detectives to rapidly respond to disease outbreaks and control them.** Field Epidemiology Training Programs around the world have decades of experience developing technical experts and public health leaders.
- **Develop 30 advanced national epidemic intelligence dashboards so countries can monitor potential health threats in real time.** This includes monitoring for signals from government and official sites, social media, news and expert groups
- **Upgrade 300 national laboratories to be able to routinely test for dangerous pathogens, including COVID-19.** This includes developing specimen collection and transport networks for timely testing and reporting of results.
- **Develop 30 national contingency funds with supporting legislation.** These rapidly accessible and disburseable funds can support the deployment of early outbreak investigation teams so outbreaks are controlled before they spread.
- **Develop 15 fully functional public health emergency operations centers to effectively manage and coordinate emergency response operations.** This includes training on incident management and the ability to rapidly activate emergency response.
- **Decrease the time it takes to identify, verify, respond to and control an outbreak.** Identify and monitor improvements in the timeliness of effective outbreak response.

Now is the time to act boldly. COVID-19 is our wakeup call. The world was not prepared. It is *inevitable* that the risk to Americans will be higher if we don't support other countries to tamp down the pandemic and prevent the next health threat. What's *not inevitable* is that the world will continue to be so woefully underprepared. By acting now, you can better protect our country from COVID-19 and future health threats.

We urge you to specify global health defense funding of \$1 billion a year for CDC in the Supplemental request under consideration. You will be making an essential investment in our nation's health defense by keeping Americans safer from infectious disease threats and protecting us from avoidable further harms on our economy.

Thank you for your consideration of this request. Please do not hesitate to reach out at tfrieden@rtsl.org or to our staff at rleidig@rtsl.org.

Sincerely,



Thomas R. Frieden, MD, MPH
President and Chief Executive Officer
Resolve to Save Lives



José Luis Castro
President and Chief Executive Officer
Vital Strategies

Cc: Honorable Nita Lowey, Honorable Kay Granger, Honorable Richard Shelby, Honorable Pat Leahy