

April 5, 2016

The Honorable Paul Ryan  
Speaker  
U.S. House of Representatives  
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Nancy Pelosi  
Minority Leader  
U.S. House of Representatives  
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Fred Upton  
Chairman  
Committee on Energy and Commerce  
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Frank Pallone  
Ranking Member  
Committee on Energy and Commerce  
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Hal Rogers  
Chairman  
Committee on Appropriations  
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Nita Lowey  
Ranking Member  
Committee on Appropriations  
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Speaker Ryan and Minority Leader Pelosi, Chairman Upton and Representative Pallone, and Chairman Rogers and Representative Lowey,

The undersigned organizations committed to the health and wellbeing of our nation's families and communities urge you in the strongest terms to immediately provide emergency supplemental funding to prepare for and respond to the Zika virus here in the United States. We also urge that Congress provide new funding rather than repurpose money from other high priority programs at the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and other federal agencies that ensure our health security and public health preparedness.

As you know, the Zika virus has been linked to microcephaly, a serious birth defect of the brain, in babies of mothers who contracted the virus while pregnant. Thousands of devastating birth defects have been observed among infants born in South and Central America in recent months. Zika has already been diagnosed in travelers returning to the U.S. from these areas. As the summer months approach and we enter mosquito season, our nation can expect to be exposed to mosquitos that can spread this virus. Over four million babies are born in our nation each year, and many of their mothers could be at risk for contracting Zika during pregnancy.

With emergency supplemental funding to respond to the Zika virus, state and local public health professionals would have access to increased virus readiness and response capacity focused on areas with ongoing Zika transmission; enhanced laboratory, epidemiology and surveillance capacity in at-risk areas to reduce the opportunities for Zika transmission and surge capacity through rapid response teams to limit potential clusters of Zika virus in the United States. Moreover, supplemental funding will assist the CDC and USAID in efforts to contain the Zika virus in Zika-endemic countries and ensure that there are resources for surveillance, vector control and services for affected pregnant women and children.

If we take immediate action, we may be able to dramatically slow the spread of Zika, giving scientists time to develop and test a vaccine. Without action, however, we fear the number of newborns born with debilitating birth defects will only continue to rise. In addition to the human toll on children and families, the CDC estimates that the average lifetime cost of caring for each child born with microcephaly will likely be millions of dollars *per child*. For hard-hit communities, an epidemic of severe birth defects could quickly overwhelm health care and social services systems, and put extreme pressure on educational and other institutions.

The President has requested emergency funding to educate Americans about protecting themselves, reduce the mosquito population, and accelerate Zika vaccine research. Each of these steps is vital to reducing the likelihood that pregnant women will be exposed to the Zika virus.

Our nation has a brief window of opportunity to slow the spread of the Zika virus and avert a wave of preventable birth defects. We urge you to act immediately to provide the emergency resources necessary to protect pregnant women, infants and children from this devastating infection.

Sincerely,

Academic Pediatric Association  
American Academy of Family Physicians  
American Academy of Pediatrics  
American Association for Clinical Chemistry  
American Association for Pediatric Ophthalmology and Strabismus  
American College of Nurse-Midwives  
American College of Preventive Medicine  
American Congress of Obstetricians and Gynecologists  
American Medical Association  
American Nurses Association  
American Pediatric Society  
American Public Health Association  
American Sexual Health Association  
American Society for Clinical Pathology  
American Society for Reproductive Medicine  
Association for Professionals in Infection Control and Epidemiology  
Association of Maternal & Child Health Programs  
Association of Medical School Pediatric Department Chairs  
Association of Public Health Laboratories  
Association of Reproductive Health Professionals  
Association of Schools and Programs of Public Health  
Association of State and Territorial Health Officials  
Association of Women's Health, Obstetric and Neonatal Nurses  
Children's Environmental Health Network  
Children's Hospital Association

Commissioned Officers Association of the U.S. Public Health Service, Inc.  
Cooley's Anemia Foundation  
Council of State and Territorial Epidemiologists  
Easter Seals  
Every Child By Two  
First Candle  
GBS|CIDP Foundation International  
Healthcare Ready  
HIV Medicine Association  
Infectious Diseases Society of America  
Intrexon  
Johnson & Johnson  
March of Dimes  
National Association of County and City Health Officials  
National Birth Defects Prevention Network  
National Association of Pediatric Nurse Practitioners  
National Council of La Raza  
National Environmental Health Association  
National Foundation for Infectious Diseases  
National Hispanic Medical Association  
National Medical Association  
National Network of Public Health Institutes  
National Organization for Rare Disorders  
National Partnership for Women & Families  
National Recreation and Park Association  
Novavax, Inc.  
Nurse Practitioners in Women's Health  
OraSure Technologies, Inc.  
Oregon Public Health Association  
Pediatric Infectious Diseases Society  
Pediatric Policy Council  
Public Health Institute  
Research!America  
Resolve: The National Infertility Association  
Save Babies Through Screening Foundation  
Society for Healthcare Epidemiology of America  
Society for Maternal-Fetal Medicine  
Society for Pediatric Research  
Society for Women's Health Research  
The Arc  
The Newborn Foundation  
Trisomy 18 Foundation  
Trust for America's Health

April 5, 2016

The Honorable Mitch McConnell  
Majority Leader  
U.S. Senate  
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Harry Reid  
Minority Leader  
U.S. Senate  
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Lamar Alexander  
Chairman  
Committee on Health, Education, Labor  
and Pensions  
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Patty Murray  
Ranking Member  
Committee on Health, Education, Labor  
and Pensions  
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Thad Cochran  
Chairman  
Committee on Appropriations  
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Barbara Mikulski  
Ranking Member  
Committee on Appropriations  
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Majority Leader McConnell and Minority Leader Reid, Chairman Alexander and Senator Murray,  
and Chairman Cochran and Senator Mikulski,

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National Partnership for Women & Families  
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OraSure Technologies, Inc.  
Oregon Public Health Association  
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