GHTC
global health technologies coalition

advancing **innovation** to save lives

March 29, 2018

The Honorable Rodney Frelinghuysen
Chairman
House Appropriations Committee
2306 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Nita Lowey
Ranking Member
House Appropriations Committee
2365 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Harold Rogers
Chair
House Appropriations Subcommittee on State, Foreign Operations, and Related Programs
2406 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Members of the Appropriations Committee:

As members of the Global Health Technologies Coalition (GHTC)—a group of more than 25 organizations working to increase awareness of the vital role health technologies play in saving lives in the developing world—we write to highlight the critical role of US programs that support global health research and development (R&D) and encourage your continued support for this important work.

US investment in the development of new vaccines, drugs, devices, diagnostics, and other health technologies is essential to addressing some of the world's most pressing health challenges—achieving an AIDS-free generation, curbing the spread of malaria, tuberculosis, and neglected tropical diseases (NTDs), and ending preventable child deaths. We recognize that you face many difficult decisions and are grateful for the Committee's ongoing support for global health R&D. New global health tools and technologies hold promise to dramatically improve the lives of those living in the poorest countries around the world, and we ask for your continued support in fiscal year (FY) 2019.

To this end, for FY19 we strongly urge the Committee to sustain and protect funding for research to develop new global health products and innovations through the Global Health Programs account under the State Department and the US Agency for International Development (USAID). This means rejecting cuts to global health programs called for by the Administration for FY19, and supporting at minimum sustained funding at FY18 levels for each disease or population-specific program under State and USAID global health accounts. To ensure R&D is appropriately prioritized, we also urge you to instruct USAID to prioritize R&D within each of the disease and condition areas under USAID's Global Health Programs account.

The United States has long played a leading role in research and innovation for new technologies to combat global health challenges. Global health research through USAID and the State Department has supported such breakthroughs as new treatments for malaria, innovative microbicides to prevent transmission of HIV in low-resource settings, and interventions to help women and infants in childbirth.

It is critical to sustain and build on this leadership: More than 80 percent of Americans say that it is important for the United States to work to improve health globally through R&D.

In addition, as our world becomes more interconnected, it is clear that global health R&D provides direct benefits to US citizens and that the health of Americans is dependent on the health of populations abroad. Evidenced by the 2014 Ebola epidemic in West Africa, health crises abroad can become health crises at home, and protecting the well-being of Americans requires a globally-focused approach. Today's investments in global health innovations to prevent and treat diseases in the developing world—such as extensively drug-resistant tuberculosis, malaria, and NTDs—will save millions of lives in the future.

With less than one-half of one percent of the federal budget, USAID works around the world to support US goals in global health and development, and strengthen relationships with key US partners. Global health R&D at USAID has supported the development, introduction, and scale-up of affordable health products, as well as policies and practices appropriate for addressing health issues in developing countries. In this work, USAID harnesses its comparative advantage of strong on-the-ground presence in low- and middle-income countries to support late-stage research and product development of global health technologies 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 infectious disease epidemics in response to recent outbreaks of Ebola and Zika. USAID's Fighting Ebola Grand Challenge identified 1,500 innovative technologies to advance the fight against Ebola, and is funding further refinement of 14, including novel personal protective equipment. The Combating Zika and Future Threats Grand Challenge received over 900 crowdsourced technology proposals and selected 26 projects to fund, which cut across vector control, vector and disease surveillance, diagnostics, and other interventions.

- Advancing global health R&D partnerships and leveraging US R&D funding for greater impact. USAID coordinates with the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, Grand Challenges Canada, the government of Norway, and other donors through the Saving Lives at Birth grand challenge, focused on developing lifesaving innovations for mothers and newborns. The program has successfully leveraged $20 million in US government funding to attract more than $110 million from outside donors to fund a pipeline of 94 innovations.

- Supporting research to develop safe, effective, accessible, and acceptable tools for use in the developing world to prevent HIV—including HIV vaccines, and microbicides based on antiretroviral drugs, which have shown potential to prevent HIV infection in women.

- Playing a key role in the global effort to fight TB by supporting research to develop new therapeutics and providing expertise on implementation and scale-up of products that are ultimately licensed.

- Supporting the distribution of more than 250 million courses of the child-friendly malaria drug Coartem® Dispersible, which is estimated to have saved 340,000 young lives from malaria between 2009 and 2013.

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. USAID is an important partner in global health product development, and it is critical for the agency to bolster this function of its global health programming. This means that **global health programs within USAID require robust funding in order to ensure they have appropriate resources both for on-going programs and forward-looking R&D efforts.**

For the vast majority of USAID's global health programming, there are no dedicated funding streams or programs expressly supporting global health R&D. Accordingly, decisions on USAID's investments in new global health technologies are made at the program level, based on overall funding allocations for each disease or population-specific health area. To ensure research is appropriately prioritized, global health programs need appropriate resources. Funding cuts—such as those proposed in the Administration's FY19 budget—would put significant strain on USAID's global health programs and jeopardize they agency's ability to balance current programming needs with needs for new drugs, vaccines, diagnostics, and other tools to accelerate global health gains.

USAID recognizes the value of global health R&D, and how new global health tools can help finally curb infectious disease outbreaks, end preventable maternal and child deaths, and achieve an AIDS-free generation. In its annual report on Health-Related Research and Development, USAID details its investments in global health R&D across all diseases and accounts, and describes how these efforts advance our overarching global health goals. This report is a critical tool to provide insight and transparency into how USAID thinks strategically about R&D investments, and needs Congressional support to continue. The *Global Health Innovation Act* (HR 1660), introduced by Congressmen Sires and Diaz-Balart, codifies this report, and we urge the Committee to support this and other action and funding to maintain this important oversight mechanism.

We urge the Committee to maintain strong support for the Global Health Programs account under the State Department and USAID, and urge the agency to invest in research and development for new global health innovations in each of the disease and condition areas within the account. This means supporting <u>at minimum</u> sustained funding at FY18 levels for each disease or population-specific program and rejecting cuts to global health programs called for by the Administration for FY19.

We also support prioritization of USAID's Annual Report on Global Health R&D and commend its valuable role in detailing the impact of USAID-led global health R&D on the agency's overarching global health objectives.

In addition, we stress the critical contributions of the Center for Accelerating Innovation and Impact in supporting cutting-edge strategies for the development and scale-up of priority global health interventions and ask that the center receive continued support.

Continued investment to support research throughout each of USAID's global health accounts is critical to progress in global health. Such investments can ensure that the progress made in global health over the past decade, thanks to increased support from the United States, is not reversed.

In addition to bringing lifesaving tools to those who need them most, global health R&D is a smart economic investment for the United States. Investment in global health R&D drives job creation, spurs business activity, and benefits academic institutions: **89 cents of every US dollar spent on global health R&D goes directly to US-based researchers.**

We stand ready to work with you to advance US leadership in global health and global health innovation, and ask that support for global health R&D not come at the expense of other humanitarian assistance and development accounts. Now more than ever, Congress must make smart budget decisions. Global health research that improves the lives of people around the world—while at the same time supporting US interests, creating jobs, and spurring economic growth at home—is a win-win.

Please do not hesitate to contact GHTC Director Jamie Bay Nishi at jnishi@ghtcoalition.org or (202) 540-4379, if you have questions or need any additional information.

Sincerely,

Aeras

American Society of Tropical Medicine & Hygiene

AVAC

Drugs for Neglected Diseases *initiative*

Elizabeth Glaser Pediatric AIDS Foundation

Global Health Council

Global Health Technologies Coalition

HarvestPlus

International AIDS Vaccine Initiative

Infectious Diseases Society of America

International Partnership for Microbicides

PATH

Population Council

RESULTS

Treatment Action Group

TB Alliance

Washington Global Health Alliance