

January 10, 2021

The Honorable Atul Gawande
Assistant Administrator for Global Health
US Agency for International Development

Dear Dr. Gawande:

On behalf of the [Global Health Technologies Coalition \(GHTC\)](#), the premier advocacy organization focused on research and development (R&D) for global health, we wish to congratulate you on your confirmation to serve as Assistant Administrator for Global Health at the US Agency for International Development (USAID). In your confirmation hearing statement to the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, you emphasized your dedication to innovation throughout your impressive career in medicine, public health, and research and writing. We hope this demonstrated commitment to seeking out new approaches and tools to improve health extends to your tenure at USAID, including through strong support for the Global Health Bureau's important role in supporting global health R&D, especially the development of new and improved health tools.

R&D is a force multiplier for global health. But as you know, neglected diseases, which disproportionately affect people in poverty, offer few commercial incentives for the private sector. Adding to this disparity, people in poverty often live in low-resource settings, where it is difficult and often impossible to effectively implement tools that were designed for use in settings with consistent access to electricity, sanitation, refrigeration, health worker training, and reliable supply chains. Motivated by these long-standing and far-reaching challenges, USAID has for decades been a core sponsor of the development and deployment of innovations—such as child-friendly malaria and TB treatments, a microbicide vaginal ring for women-led HIV prevention, and a battery-powered IV infusion rate monitor, among dozens of others—that have opened new pathways for progress in global health.

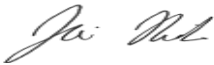
USAID's contributions to global health R&D are unique and high impact but have not always been fostered with leadership and funding sufficient to the scope of need. This unfortunate trend has accelerated during the COVID-19 pandemic, during which the agency has made extremely limited investments in innovations designed to combat the pandemic in the most austere and high-need settings—despite congressional support and an infusion of emergency funding that might have supported a Grand Challenge innovation program similar to those run by the agency during the Ebola and Zika epidemics.

Moving forward, to better center innovation as a core priority of the Global Health Bureau and ensure that dedicated resources are in place as new global health challenges and R&D opportunities emerge, GHTC—with the input of our member network whose impact stretches across nearly 100 countries—has developed a new policy proposal we hope to share with you and your team as you onboard: the **Supporting Innovative Global Health Technologies (SIGHT) Fund**, a new fund to supplement resources for health product development efforts at the Global Health Bureau, independent of any one disease- or population-specific funding line. Our coalition is working with congressional stakeholders, including the newly-launched Congressional Global Health R&D

Working Group, to socialize this proposal—with an initial ask of \$750 million in multi-year funding available for expenditure over three fiscal years to launch the SIGHT Fund. We would so appreciate the opportunity to preview the SIGHT Fund for you and your team as you onboard at USAID to brief you on the incredible contributions the agency has made to global health innovation and how this new approach might accelerate this life-saving work.

Again, we wish to congratulate you on your confirmation and look forward to the opportunity to work with you to advance USAID's work in global health R&D. Please consider us and our member network as resources and partners at this pivotal moment in global health.

Sincerely,



Jamie Bay Nishi
Executive Director
Global Health Technologies Coalition
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