



AMERICAN SOCIETY FOR TROPICAL MEDICINE AND HYGIENE ALARMED AT ADMINISTRATION'S PROPOSAL TO SLASH FUNDING THAT PROTECTS AMERICA'S HEALTH AND WELL-BEING

Oakbrook Terrace, Ill. (March 16, 2017)— The American Society of Tropical Medicine and Hygiene (ASTMH), the largest international scientific organization of tropical infectious disease experts, strongly disagrees with the Trump Administration's budget proposal, revealed today, that will slash funding to critical scientific research across government agencies designed to protect Americans' health and well-being.

Cutting the funding of health agencies that protect us from existing and emerging infectious diseases – including the National Institutes of Health (NIH) and, potentially, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention – along with eliminating the Fogarty International Center, which builds needed scientific capacity in partner countries, is short-sighted and dangerous. These cuts will put the health of millions of Americans at home and abroad at risk. Our international colleagues and partners in research and delivery of care are critical to long-term success in reducing the burden of tropical diseases worldwide. We cannot conduct global health research and work to strengthen healthcare infrastructures in isolation from our international colleagues.

For NIH, the proposed 20 percent cut will have far-reaching and negative implications for our nation's research portfolio and erode decades of progress. With infectious disease research already underfunded, the suggested budget cuts to the NIH will impact researchers and their jobs in universities across the country, diminish U.S. scientific global leadership and drag down U.S. scientific advancement. Without adequate funding, researchers cannot identify treatments and vaccines to curb and end diseases that affect us all.

Regarding the CDC, a newly proposed Federal Emergency Response Fund within the agency to rapidly respond to public health outbreaks such as Zika virus is welcome news. However, programs like this don't exist in a vacuum; to do the job, they need a robust public health network.

Our concerns also extend to the U.S. military. What is not understood by this Administration is that slashing research not only hurts Americans at home but our men and women serving overseas as well. The Administration's proposal indicates an increase for the U.S. Department of Defense, but it is unclear how that will be spent. It is imperative that Army and Navy tropical medicine research be fully funded to protect our military personnel from health threats. Weapons alone cannot protect them.

The bottom line: Progress towards curbing or ending disease only comes with political will and public support for research. In the context of global health and tropical medicine, we must address diseases both abroad and domestically, and within communities worldwide; infectious diseases know no international borders. We stand ready to work with the President and Congress on a budget that protects us from infectious diseases, spurs innovation, advances U.S. scientific leadership and improves health for everyone. We can do all of this without sacrificing jobs, lives and global health security.

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