

September 28, 2016

Dear Senator,

The undersigned organizations dedicated to the health and wellbeing of our nation's children and families are pleased to support the Zika provisions in the current draft of the Continuing Resolution, as contained in the amendment to H.R. 5325 and released on September 22, and urge that they be passed as soon as possible.

It is imperative that Congress approve Zika funding immediately. The funds contained in this package will allow federal, state, tribal and local agencies to pursue a wide range of efforts to combat Zika virus and the life-altering birth defects it can cause. These funds will enable Zika vaccine research sponsored by the National Institutes of Health to proceed as quickly as possible; enhance the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's (CDC) ability to track infections and educate the public about prevention; and empower state and local governments to increase vector control, improve surveillance, and educate residents about protecting themselves. Too many of these efforts have been slowed or prevented by a lack of resources to pursue them in recent months.

Since the beginning of 2016, Zika has shifted from being an alarming but distant threat to a daily fact of life for some Americans. Over 20,000 cases of Zika infection have been reported in the U.S. and its territories, with over 90 locally-acquired infections in Florida. In Puerto Rico, where health officials have declared Zika a public health emergency, an estimated 1,500 pregnant women have been diagnosed with Zika, putting their infants at risk for birth defects like microcephaly. The CDC has issued a first-ever domestic travel advisory for an infectious disease, advising pregnant women not to travel to parts of Florida where local transmission has been documented. Moreover, scientists are learning more almost daily about the severe brain damage Zika inflicts on the fetus and infant, not only before but potentially after birth.

Our nation cannot afford to wait any longer to move aggressively against the Zika virus. We urge you in the strongest terms to pass the Zika funding package as soon as possible.

Sincerely,

AABB

American Association for Pediatric Ophthalmology and Strabismus

American Association of Colleges of Pharmacy

American College of Physicians

American College of Preventive Medicine

American Congress of Obstetricians and Gynecologists

American Public Health Association

American Society for Reproductive Medicine

American Society of Hematology

American Society of Tropical Medicine and Hygiene

Association for Professionals in Infection Control and Epidemiology
Association of American Medical Colleges
Association of Maternal & Child Health Programs
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 University Centers on Disabilities
Association of Women's Health, Obstetric and Neonatal Nurses
Children's Environmental Health Network
Coalition for Health Funding
Commissioned Officers Association of the U.S. Public Health Service, Inc. (COA)
Cooley's Anemia Foundation
Council of State and Territorial Epidemiologists
Easterseals
Family Voices
Genetic Alliance
Healthcare Ready
Infectious Diseases Society of America
March of Dimes
National Association of Community Health Centers
National Association of Pediatric Nurse Practitioners
National Association of County and City Health Officials
National Birth Defects Prevention Network
National Coalition of STD Directors
National Environmental Health Association
National Network of Public Health Institutes
National Hispanic Medical Association
National Indian Health Board
National Organization for Rare Disorders
OraSure Technologies, Inc.
Public Health Institute
Society for Fetal-Maternal Medicine
Society for Healthcare Epidemiology of America
Teratology Society
The American Society for Clinical Pathology
The Arc
The National Campaign to Prevent Teen and Unplanned Pregnancy
Trust for America's Health