GHTC
global health technologies coalition

advancing **innovation** to save lives

May 22, 2025

The Honorable Tom Cole
Chair
House Appropriations Committee
2207 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Rosa DeLauro
Ranking Member
House Appropriations Committee
2143 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Ken Calvert
Chair
Subcommittee on Defense
2205 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Betty McCollum
Ranking Member
Subcommittee on Defense
2426 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Members of the Appropriations Committee:

As members of the Global Health Technologies Coalition (GHTC)—a group of more than 50 nonprofit organizations, academic institutions, and aligned businesses advancing the creation of new drugs, vaccines, diagnostics, and other tools for global health—we write in support of the Department of Defense's (DOD's) research and development (R&D) programs for new infectious disease technologies that are used to protect service members and improve global health.

Our request: For fiscal year 2026, we respectfully urge the Committee to sustain and protect funding for research to develop and promote access to new global health technologies at DOD within the Defense Health Program and the Congressionally Directed Medical Research Program (CDMRP) by:

- Including report language in support of R&D for malaria, leishmaniasis, and diarrheal diseases at the Walter Reed Army Institute for Research and the Navy Medical Research Center.
- Requesting that malaria and tuberculosis (TB) are again included in CDMRP.

Global health R&D and DOD

In addition to protecting service members, DOD research programs also benefit global health. These incidental benefits have no additional cost to DOD, but have the potential to advance other US government priorities and hasten innovation. Millions of people die every year because we do not have the technologies to save them. The United States, as a biomedical research powerhouse, can change history through relatively small public investments.

Why global health matters: In addition to protecting the warfighter, global health is a bipartisan cornerstone of US foreign policy. Supporting the public health of partner countries has practical and moral justifications.

- It protects Americans from national health security threats, increases global political stability, lifts economies, and most importantly, saves millions of lives.

- As an example, the US government's multi-agency Operation Warp Speed supported the development of four globally distributed Food and Drug Administration-approved or authorized COVID-19 vaccines. This helped to save 14 million lives in the first year of the pandemic. Additionally, the vaccines created an estimated $895 billion of savings in direct healthcare costs between December 2020 and March 2022.

The challenge: In 2022, 1.3 million people were killed by tuberculosis, 1.3 million people were newly diagnosed with HIV, and 249 million people were infected by malaria. In 2021, at least 1.14 million people were killed by bacterial antimicrobial resistance (AMR) and 4.71 million deaths were associated with bacterial AMR. More than 1 billion people worldwide are affected by neglected tropical diseases—a group of 20 diseases caused by a variety of pathogens. Women and children are often most vulnerable, especially in low-resource settings.

New medical products are needed to overcome neglected diseases, to beat AMR, to replace outdated and toxic treatments, to prepare for future pandemics, and to better reach low-resource, remote, and unstable settings. Examples of the technologies we need:

- New tools to prevent, diagnose and treat drug-resistant microbial infections
- A vaccine and cure for HIV/AIDS.
- Innovative treatments and prevention technologies for malaria.
- Shorter tuberculosis treatment regimens and a more effective vaccine.
- Better diagnostics and treatments for many neglected tropical diseases.
- And *many others*.

Why public investment is needed: US government support for this research is critical because the private sector typically does not invest in technologies that have limited profit potential.

- Public investments often support Product Development Partnerships—not-for-profit organizations that convene government, science, private-sector, and community partners to develop new global health technologies.

The bottom line: Without new global health technologies, we are not equipped to achieve our global health foreign policy goals nor to fully protect our service members.

DOD: a leading developer of health technologies for protecting service members deployed around the world

The Department of Defense is a lead developer of products that protect service members working in low-resource settings from infectious diseases, but this work is under threat from internal budget cuts.

What is needed: Congress should support increased funding for DOD's malaria, leishmaniasis, emerging infectious diseases, and diarrheal research programs.

Why it matters: Malaria, leishmaniasis, and diarrheal research programs at the Walter Reed Army Institute of Research and the Naval Medical Research Center are on the verge of elimination due to internal budget shifts without the consent of Congress.

Quick history: DOD is the world's premier malaria research institution and has contributed to the development of nearly every anti-malarial drug and the only malaria vaccine approved by a regulator.

- Every year, DOD ranks malaria as one of the leading infectious disease threats to service members. In fact, more person-days were lost due to malaria than to bullets during every US military campaign fought in malaria-endemic regions in the 20th century.
- The malaria parasite is evolving, and new drugs and prevention tools will be needed to protect service members from this disease in the future.

DOD was the world's biggest funder of clinical research for leishmaniasis products in 2017 and 2018 but nearly zeroed out its funding in 2021.

- Leishmaniasis is a parasitic disease spread by sand flies that can be highly fatal without diagnosis and treatment.
- There is still not a reliable point-of-care diagnostic for the most common form of leishmaniasis.

DOD CDMRP: a congressionally created biomedical innovation driver for our servicemembers

What is needed: Congress should include tuberculosis in their list of diseases covered by the CDMRP's Peer Reviewed Medical Research Program (PRMRP).

Why the CDMRP's PRMRP: Including TB and malaria in the Peer Reviewed Medical Research Program will allow funding for groundbreaking research on the disease—which could include product development—potentially moving new therapies closer to approval that could more quickly treat TB and drug-resistant TB, a primary driver of the antimicrobial resistance pandemic globally. Protecting our men and women in the armed forces from TB is critical given the global footprint of the US military. The CDMRP gives researchers a unique opportunity to accelerate science and find and develop innovative solutions to better protect our service members and their families abroad while they serve our country. Dismantling the PRMRP and the CDMRP would be detrimental to service men and women who are deployed around the world and exposed to global disease threats.

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Infectious disease research protects the lives of our soldiers and millions of people around the world, fosters goodwill that enhances our national security, and promotes economic growth.

In this moment of transition and reflection on our health and research infrastructure, it is more important than ever to preserve the progress we've made and invest boldly in the innovations of tomorrow. Global health R&D is a smart, strategic investment in a safer, healthier, and more prosperous America.

Please do not hesitate to contact GHTC US Policy and Advocacy Officer Alex Long at along@ghtcoalition.org if you have questions or need any additional information.

Sincerely,

Kristie Mikus

Dr. Kristie Mikus, GHTC Executive Director and GHTC member organizations listed below

American Society of Tropical Medicine and Hygiene

Bugworks

Coalition for Epidemic Preparedness Innovations, U.S.

Drugs for Neglected Diseases *initiative*

Elizabeth Glaser Pediatric AIDS Foundation

Global Antibiotic Research and Development Partnership

FIND

Global Health Council

Global Health Technologies Coalition

Impact Global Health

Medicines for Malaria Venture

IVCC

Public Health Ambassadors Uganda

PATH

Treatment Action Group

Population Council

Population Council

TB Alliance