

January 29, 2018

The Honorable Alex Azar
Secretary
United States Department of Health and Human Services
330 C Street Southwest
Washington, DC 20416

Dear Secretary Azar:


As Director of the Global Health Technologies Coalition (GHTC)—a group of more than 25 nonprofit organizations working to increase awareness of the vital role health technologies play in saving lives around the world—I celebrate your appointment as Secretary of the US Department of Health and Human Services (HHS). As we face new and changing health challenges domestically and overseas, your leadership will be key in upholding US excellence in medical research, disease detection and response, and health diplomacy and capacity building to protect American and global health.

Under the purview of HHS, four significant institutions—the National Institutes of Health (NIH), the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), the Biological Advanced Research and Development Authority (BARDA), and Food and Drug Administration (FDA)—make major contributions to the development of new health technologies for America and the world. NIH leads US government medical research efforts, and excels in basic research that advances new drugs, diagnostics, and other tools for neglected diseases and conditions. NIH research first identified the HIV virus as the cause of AIDS, developed the first blood test for HIV/AIDS, and created strategies to prevent mother-to-child transmission of the disease, leading to drugs and intervention technologies that are used around the world. The Fogarty International Center links researchers in the United States and the developing world to support collaboration in research, training, and fellowships to address critical health challenges in more than 100 countries. The CDC leads global disease surveillance, capacity building, and research in the development of new tools and technologies—such as diagnostics to identify diseases like Ebola and the bubonic plague—and is the US leader in global health security efforts. BARDA leverages its unique expertise in late-stage product development for medical countermeasures without robust commercial markets to forge innovative partnerships to advance development of urgently needed countermeasures for emerging infectious diseases, like Ebola and Zika. The FDA ensures that safe and effective new tools to prevent, diagnose, and treat global diseases reach those who are most in need, and supports a stronger global regulatory system.

All these HHS functions are vital to a strong ecosystem for medical research and product development, and for researching, developing, delivering health tools that are urgently needed by populations at home and abroad. We value HHS's important contributions to global health R&D and look forward to working with you and your staff to sustain and build on this legacy.

Congratulations on your appointment. We hope that you will use our coalition as a resource in your work, and please do not hesitate to contact me at jnishi@ghtcoalition.org or (202) 540-4379 with any questions.

Sincerely,



Jamie Bay Nishi
Director, Global Health Technologies Coalition