



May 9, 2020

The Honorable Nancy Pelosi
H-232 Capitol Building
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Kevin McCarthy
H-204 Capitol Building
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Speaker Pelosi and Leader McCarthy:

On behalf of the Alliance for Biosecurity (Alliance), I write to express support for the following three bipartisan bills from the House Energy and Commerce Committee intended to “help streamline the response to the current pandemic and pave the way for more efficiency in the future”:

- Stockpiling for America’s Future Endeavors (SAFE) Act;
- Stockpile Inventory Modernization Act of 2020; and
- Medical Supplies for Pandemics Act of 2020

As you are aware, one critical preparedness tool is the ability of the Secretary of the Department of Health and Human Services to declare public health emergencies and to maintain a Strategic National Stockpile (SNS). The SNS is the nation’s largest supply of potentially life-saving pharmaceuticals and medical supplies for use in a public health emergency severe enough to cause local supplies to run out. Among other things, it:

- is responsible for strategic procurement and stockpiling of medical countermeasures (MCMs), medical supplies, and equipment for all populations, which is necessary to protect Americans’ health and save lives;
- ensures the right medicines and supplies are available when and where needed;
- is the procurement mechanism for many FDA-approved MCMs, some of which have no commercial market, such as licensed vaccines and drugs against smallpox and anthrax; and
- includes Biomedical Advanced Research and Development Authority (BARDA) developed and supported vaccines, drugs, therapies, and diagnostic tools for public health medical emergencies

Unfortunately, the COVID-19 pandemic has put a significant strain on the SNS, forcing the federal government to tap into these critical reserves. While decision-making, planning, procurement, and life cycle management of MCMs as relate to the SNS are now appropriately consolidated within the Office of the Assistant Secretary for Preparedness and Response – something that the Alliance supports given the resulting efficiencies – it is clear that further support for the SNS would benefit our preparedness and response capabilities in terms of COVID-19, as well as future public health emergencies.

The three bills referenced above would offer additional flexibility and resources to the SNS, including by:

- allowing the SNS to accept gifts from companies and individuals during the COVID-19 public health emergency;

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- permitting the SNS to sell existing products when they are no longer needed, thus reducing waste and ensuring that the SNS has sufficient financial resources; and
- allowing for public-private partnerships to maintain and strengthen the SNS, including by providing incentives to manufacturers to work with the federal government to stock the SNS

Moreover, as Congress prepares to move forward with the FY 2021 budget and appropriations process, it is important to underscore the need for strong support and funding of those programs that are critical to advancing America's preparedness and response efforts, including BARDA, Project BIOShield Special Reserve Fund (SRF), and SNS, among others.

The Alliance also believes that more should be done to advance our nation's preparedness and response capabilities. For example, as demonstrated by the spread of COVID-19, emerging infectious diseases (EIDs) are emerging at a rapid rate. Unfortunately, the ASPR currently has no dedicated funding to address EIDs, so MCMs are often not available for immediate response when an EID outbreak occurs. As such, the Alliance urges Congress to create a separate EID budget line item that would allow the ASPR to regularly evaluate the EID landscape.

The Alliance also notes that infections caused by drug resistant pathogens are far more difficult and costlier to treat. Moreover, as you likely are aware, drug resistant pathogens are also a prime candidate for weaponization by our nation's enemies, both state and non-state actors. It is for this reason that the Alliance believes that there is an urgent need to take steps to reinvigorate the antimicrobial pipeline.

Finally, as Congress continues moving forward with its response to the current public health emergency, the Alliance also urges you to consider ways to address another threat facing our nation: pandemic influenza. While pandemic influenza has been identified as a top national security threat by the U.S. government, there remain unaddressed challenges facing the domestic influenza vaccine enterprise. One key way to address these challenges is through strong federal funding to support the development and manufacturing of influenza vaccines, therapeutics, and diagnostics, as there is no commercial market for many of these products. Supporting these pandemic influenza activities will go a long way to ensuring that we are better prepared and able to respond to future influenza outbreaks – something that will be particularly critical in the face of the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic.

In conclusion, the Alliance very much appreciates your interest in, and support for, providing the resources necessary to respond to public health emergencies – both at present and in the future. We look forward to working with you to advance these critical priorities for our nation.

Sincerely,



The Honorable Jack Kingston
Squire Patton Boggs
Secretariat, Alliance for Biosecurity



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The Alliance for Biosecurity is a coalition of biopharmaceutical companies and laboratory/academic partners that promotes a strong public-private partnership to ensure medical countermeasures are available to protect public health and enhance national health security. The Alliance advocates for public policies and funding to support the rapid development, production, stockpiling, and distribution of critically needed medical countermeasures. Learn more online at AllianceForBiosecurity.com.