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United States Senate

COMMITTEE ON HEALTH, EDUCATION,
LABOR, AND PENSIONS

WASHINGTON, DC 20510-6300

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<http://help.senate.gov>

January 25, 2018

Dr. Brenda Fitzgerald, MD
Director
Centers for Disease Control and Prevention
1600 Clifton Road
Atlanta, GA 30329

Dear Dr. Fitzgerald:

Last week, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) announced plans to significantly scale back its work in the global health security agenda (GHSA) initiative, which was launched in 2014 to better prevent, detect, and respond to infectious disease threats abroad. In late 2014, Congress designated \$582 million for the GHSA as part of emergency funding in response to the Ebola epidemic in West Africa that resulted in over 11,000 deaths.¹ I am concerned that discontinuing this work with 39 countries will undermine the sustainability of newly developed public health infrastructure and risk an ill-equipped global response to future public health crises. This global network should remain a critical tool in prevention and rapid response to support the health and safety of communities across the globe and here at home. I therefore seek additional information about the decision to reduce CDC's global health work, and how you will both maintain the progress that has been made thus far and ensure continued progress in global health security.

The GHSA is a partnership between foreign countries, international organizations, and public and private stakeholders to combat infectious disease threats and promote global health security.² Through the GHSA, the CDC expanded work to 49 countries to improve their public health infrastructure. This work includes expanding surveillance to detect new viruses and drug-resistant bacteria, improving laboratory capabilities to better detect disease, and training workers to respond to potential epidemics. Such efforts are critical to detecting and attenuating infectious diseases abroad, which better protects us from public health threats here in the United States.

Funding for the CDC's work on the GHSA is scheduled to expire at the end of fiscal year 2019. If no additional funding is designated for the GHSA, the CDC has announced plans to narrow its global health security activities to 10 "priority" countries starting in October 2019.³ The ten countries are India, Thailand, Vietnam, Kenya, Uganda, Liberia, Nigeria, Senegal, Jordan, and Guatemala. CDC will reportedly begin to transition out of the 39 other countries and will plan to

¹ https://www.cdc.gov/globalhealth/security/infographics/decoding_ghsa.htm;

<https://www.cdc.gov/vhf/ebola/outbreaks/2014-west-africa/previous-case-counts.html>

² <https://www.cdc.gov/globalhealth/security/ghsagenda.htm>; <https://www.ghsagenda.org/members>

³ <https://www.wsj.com/articles/cdc-to-scale-back-work-in-dozens-of-foreign-countries-amid-funding-worries-1516398717?mg=prod/accounts-wsj>

complete its work there by October 2020. The agency has also identified the next five priority countries (China, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Ethiopia, Indonesia, and Sierra Leone) should they receive additional funding.

Given CDC's mission to protect our nation from both foreign and domestic threats to our health, safety, and security, I trust that you share the goal of detecting and attenuating infectious diseases as soon as possible, wherever they may arise throughout the world. To that end, please provide a briefing to answer the following questions by no later than February 8, 2018:

1. How did CDC select the ten countries where they will continue global health security activities if funding expires in FY2019? How did CDC select the next five priority countries?
2. What is the timeline for CDC to phase out its work from the 39 countries that have not been deemed priorities? What, if any, measures will be put in place to ensure sustainability of public health infrastructure created through the GHSA?
3. What are potential impacts globally and domestically of reducing assistance to only 10 countries?
4. How is CDC working with other U.S. federal government partners to communicate possible changes in the American investment in the GHSA to other countries and allies in this effort?
5. What level of funding is necessary to avoid the planned reduction in Global Health Security activities?
6. If CDC receives additional funding to continue its global health security work, does the agency plan to continue work in all 49 countries as it is occurring now? If not, please explain what changes the agency plans to make.

Thank you in advance for your attention to this critical matter. If you have any questions, or would like to further discuss compliance with this request, please contact Elizabeth Letter or Andi Fristedt with Senator Murray's HELP Committee Staff at 202-224-6403.

Sincerely,



Patty Murray
United States Senator
Ranking Member, Senate Health, Education,
Labor, and Pensions Committee

cc: Lamar Alexander, United States Senator,
Chairman, Senate Health, Education, Labor and Pensions Committee