



June 11, 2020

Dear Representatives DeGette and Upton,

On behalf of the Vector-Borne Disease Network (VBDN), we, the undersigned organizations, write to express our strong support for the objectives articulated in your “Cures 2.0” concept paper, especially those related to public health and pandemic preparedness. This legislation, once enacted, will build upon the success of the *21<sup>st</sup> Century Cures Act* to strengthen our nation’s public health infrastructure and our ability to protect and safeguard our country from serious diseases, including vector-borne threats. The current COVID-19 pandemic has brought the need for public health preparedness into sharp focus, and your leadership on this issue is appreciated and more important than ever.

The VBDN is a stakeholder group of organizations led by the Entomological Society of America (ESA) that aims to reduce human and animal suffering caused by arthropod disease vectors. The VBDN applauds your inclusion of provisions related to creating a national testing and response strategy for current and future pandemics, a pandemic preparedness program for patients, and vaccine and immunization programs in the initial planning for Cures 2.0. We urge you to ensure that these ideas are incorporated into legislation, whether in future relief packages aimed at combatting and responding to COVID-19 or in the upcoming update to the *21<sup>st</sup> Century Cures Act*.

The emergence and rapid spread of COVID-19 demonstrates that threats to public health, including diseases carried by vectors like mosquitoes and ticks, are escalating, and we have seen how a lack of preparedness for this pandemic has compromised our efforts to protect public health. Many of these vector-borne diseases have high mortality rates and no effective vaccines or treatments. Managing the vectors of disease through effective strategies generally occurs through the state, county, and city department of healths, and are subject to dramatic fluctuations in funding through state and local government budgets as well as the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention’s (CDC) Epidemiology and Laboratory Capacity (ELC) program funding. Last year the CDC was only able to fund one-third of the grants requested by the states to address vector-borne disease prevention, surveillance, and management. This makes sustainable employment of highly qualified and trained entomologists and epidemiologists, who play a critical role in the vector surveillance and management, challenging. To ensure that public health challenges can be effectively met, public health and vector-control professionals must be equipped with the resources and capacity necessary for the prevention, treatment, and control of vector-borne diseases.

Ensuring that federal funding agencies have the authority and resources necessary to respond to critical public health emergencies is central to our nation’s health security, and your leadership on Cures 2.0 is essential to meeting that goal. The VBDN is committed to addressing the public health and economic challenges posed by vector-borne threats, and we continue to support all efforts to provide strong, sustained funding for the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), as well as full funding for the vector-borne disease efforts authorized under the *Kay Hagan TICK Act* and the *Pandemic and All Hazards Preparedness and Advancing Innovation Act*, specifically the *Strengthening Mosquito*

*Abatement for Safety and Health Programs (SMASH Act)*, two public health preparedness measures enacted last year by Congress.

Our coalition stands at the ready to assist you and your Congressional colleagues on these and other relevant public health efforts. On behalf of the VBDN, we thank you for your commitment to this critical issue.

Sincerely,

American Mosquito Control Association  
American Society of Tropical Medicine and Hygiene  
Association of Public Health Laboratories  
Council of State and Territorial Epidemiologists  
Entomological Society of America  
Florida Medical Entomology Laboratory  
Georgia Mosquito Control Association  
Infectious Disease Society of America  
Midwest Center of Excellence for Vector Borne Disease  
Minnesota Department of Health  
Mosquito and Vector Control Association of California  
National Association of County and City Health Officials  
National Association of Vector-Borne Disease Control Officials  
National Environmental Health Association  
National Pest Management Association  
The New Jersey State Mosquito Control Commission  
North Carolina Mosquito and Vector Control Association  
Northeast Regional Center for Excellence in Vector-Borne Diseases  
Pacific Southwest Center of Excellence in Vector-Borne Diseases  
Puerto Rico Vector Control Unit  
Society for Vector Ecology  
Southeastern Center of Excellence in Vector Borne Diseases  
TickEncounter Resource Center, University of Rhode Island  
Western Gulf Center of Excellence for Vector-Borne Diseases