

February 28, 2024

The Honorable Tom Cole
Chairman
House Committee on Appropriations
Room H-307, U.S. Capitol
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Rosa DeLauro
Ranking Member
House Committee on Appropriations
1036 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Susan Collins
Chair
Senate Committee on Appropriations
Room S-128, U.S. Capitol
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Patty Murray
Vice Chair
Senate Committee on Appropriations
Room S-128, U.S. Capitol
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Chairman Cole, Ranking Member DeLauro, Chair Collins and Vice Chair Murray,

The undersigned organizations urge the House and Senate Appropriations Committees to support at least a \$20 million increase for the National Wastewater Surveillance System within the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's Emerging Infectious Diseases program at the National Center for Emerging and Zoonotic Infectious Diseases (NCEZID) in the fiscal year (FY) 2025 Labor, Health, Human Service and Education (Labor-HHS) appropriations bill, allowing the CDC to detect and track emerging infectious diseases.

The CDC's Emerging Infectious Disease program protects Americans from outbreaks by building and sustaining public health laboratory capacity, developing diagnostic tests for emerging infectious diseases and responding to emerging outbreaks. The National Wastewater Surveillance System works in concert with these programs, serving as an early warning system for outbreaks. An increase of \$20 million for Emerging Infectious Diseases will allow the CDC to maintain wastewater surveillance in a limited number of states, covering about 20% of the U.S. population.

Wastewater monitoring allows public health professionals and communities to react in real time to prevent disease spread by identifying the presence of pathogens without the need for individuals to be tested or to show symptoms of infections. The CDC is currently using wastewater surveillance to monitor highly pathogenic avian influenza (H5N1), allowing public health officials to detect outbreaks without patients seeking clinical care.

The National Wastewater Surveillance System program began as a pilot program under the 2020 CARES Act and was expanded with supplemental funding through subsequent legislation addressing the COVID-19 pandemic. Since then, wastewater surveillance has continued to be a critical tool in detecting and monitoring infectious diseases including seasonal flu, mpox and RSV. The CDC is also investigating the use of wastewater surveillance for Dengue virus and Orungo virus response. CDC has been able to build limited surveillance capacity through supplemental funding; however, without adequate base funding, the agency will not be able to maintain a national surveillance program.

We urge you to include at least \$20 million in additional funding to the Emerging Infectious Diseases program in the final FY25 Labor-HHS appropriations bill and we look forward to working with you on this important topic. Thank you for your consideration of this request.

Sincerely,

American Society for Microbiology

AdvaMedDx

American Institute of Biological Sciences

American Jail Association

American Public Health Association

American Society for Clinical Pathology

American Society for Virology

Association for Molecular Pathology

Association for Professionals in Infection Control and Epidemiology

Association of State and Territorial Health Officials

Big Cities Health Coalition

Biophysical Society

Centivax, Inc

Clear Labs

Council of State and Territorial Epidemiologists

Entomological Society of America

Gerontological Society of America

National Association of Clean Water Agencies

National Association of County & City Health Officials

National Environmental Health Association

National Network of Public Health Institutes

Rice University

Society for Healthcare Epidemiology of America

Society for Public Health Education

Trust for America's Health

University of Connecticut

University of Denver

University of Wisconsin, Madison

Water Environment Federation