

February 3, 2022

The Honorable Diana DeGette  
United States House of Representatives  
2111 Rayburn House Office Building  
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Fred Upton  
United States House of Representatives  
2183 Rayburn House Office Building  
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Representatives DeGette and Upton,

The undersigned organizations, representing clinicians, scientists, patients, public health, animal agriculture and the pharmaceutical and diagnostics industries thank you for including the Pioneering Antimicrobial Subscriptions to End Upsurging Resistance (PASTEUR) Act in the Cures 2.0 Act.

Antimicrobial resistance (AMR) is one of the greatest public health threats of our time. Drug-resistant infections sicken at least 2.8 million people and kill at least 35,000 people in the US each year.

Antimicrobial resistance accounts for direct health care costs of at least \$20 billion. Globally, over 700,000 people die each year, imposing economic and health systems costs as high as \$1.2 trillion. If we do not act now, antibiotic resistant infections will be the leading cause of death by 2050 and could cost the world \$100 trillion.

Strengthening our ability to combat AMR is also central to our nation's public health and pandemic preparedness—a key goal of the Cures 2.0 Act. A large study of 148 hospitals across 17 states that found that COVID-19 surges negatively impact rates of antibiotic resistant infections. Specifically, from March- September 2020, the study found a 24% increase in hospital-onset multidrug resistant infections.<sup>1</sup> At the same time, another study found that over 77% of patients with COVID-19 were prescribed antibiotics, despite most of these patients not having a secondary bacterial infection.<sup>2</sup> More broadly, outside of the context of COVID, any event involving mass hospitalizations - and especially high levels of ventilator use, would carry significant risk of secondary infections, particularly for patients with weakened immune systems. Also, while COVID-19 is a viral public health emergency, the next pandemic could be bacterial or fungal in nature, and we are woefully unprepared.

Unfortunately, the pipeline of new and innovative antimicrobials in development is inadequate to meet patient needs. Small companies that are responsible for nearly all current antibiotic innovation are struggling to sustain operations. Factors unique to antibiotics, including the need to use these drugs sparingly, make it challenging for companies to earn a reasonable return on investment. As a result, many companies have either closed their antibiotics research programs or gone bankrupt.

While antibiotic innovation dwindles, rates of resistance continue to climb, and resistant infections continue to spread. Antimicrobial stewardship programs at health care facilities are effective at guiding optimal antibiotic use and reducing resistance, but they are frequently under-resourced. During the COVID-19 pandemic, stewardship programs have also been tasked with leading the complex administration of COVID-19 therapeutics, which has further limited bandwidth for work aimed at reducing AMR.

The PASTEUR Act would provide important solutions on both fronts—revitalizing the antibiotics market by providing a predictable return on investment that is delinked from antibiotic use and establishing a new grant program to support antibiotic stewardship programs in hospitals.

Once again, we thank you for your leadership on Cures 2.0 and look forward to working with you to advance critical policies to combat antimicrobial resistance.

Sincerely,

Accelerate Diagnostics

AdvaMedDx

American Academy of Allergy, Asthma & Immunology

American Society for Microbiology

American Society of Tropical Medicine & Hygiene

AMR Action Fund

AMR.Solutions

Antimicrobial Innovation Alliance

Association for Professionals in Infection Control and Epidemiology

Becton, Dickinson and Co.

BEAM Alliance

BIO

Boston University

Clarametyx Bioscience Inc.

Cystic Fibrosis Foundation

Duke-Margolis Center for Health Policy

Emory University Antibiotic Resistance Center

Emory University School of Medicine

GARDP North America

Genentech, Inc., A member of the Roche Group

GSK

Healthcare Leadership Council

HealthyWomen

HIV Medicine Association

Infectious Diseases Society of America

Kimberly Coffey Foundation

Michigan Antibiotic Resistance Reduction Coalition

National Association of Pediatric Nurse Practitioners

NTM Info & Research

ONCORD, Inc.

Partnership to Fight Chronic Disease

Partnership to Fight Infectious Diseases

Peggy Lillis Foundation

Phare Bio

Research!America

Sepsis Alliance

Shionogi Inc.

Spero Therapeutics

The Gerontological Society of America

The Stuart B. Levy Center for Integrated Management of Antimicrobial Resistance at Tufts

The Pew Charitable Trusts

Trust For America's Health

Venatorx Pharmaceuticals

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<sup>1</sup> <https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/34370014/>

<sup>2</sup> <https://academic.oup.com/ofid/article/8/6/ofab236/6291836>