September 20, 2012

The Honorable Tom Harkin  
Chairman, Senate HELP Committee  
731 Hart Senate Office Building  
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Richard Burr  
The Honorable Gene Green  
217 Russell Senate Office Building  
Washington, DC 20510  
2470 Rayburn House Office Building  
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Mike Enzi  
Ranking Member, Senate HELP Committee  
379A Russell Senate Office Building  
Washington, DC 20510  
The Honorable Robert Casey  
The Honorable Mike Rogers  
393 Russell Senate Office Building  
Washington, DC 20510  
133 Cannon House Office Building  
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Senators and Representatives:

On behalf of the Infectious Disease Society of America (IDSA), I commend you for your leadership in advancing reauthorization of the Pandemic and All Hazards Preparedness Act (PAHPA) and urge you to complete final passage of this critically important legislation immediately. IDSA represents nearly 10,000 physicians and scientists devoted to patient care, prevention, public health, education, and research in infectious diseases. IDSA members will help lead our nation’s response to any future bioterrorist attack, pandemic or other infectious disease emergency at the federal, state and local levels.

Ensuring our nation is prepared to respond to a public health emergency is a core responsibility of our government, and PAHPA reauthorization is a critical component of this effort. In particular, IDSA strongly supports provisions to reauthorize and strengthen the Biomedical Advanced Research and Development Authority (BARDA), Project BioShield, surge capacity and biosurveillance programs, hospital preparedness efforts, and systems for vaccine tracking and distribution.

Of note, this month, IDSA published an updated set of Pandemic and Seasonal Influenza Principles for United States Action, which is available at www.idsociety.org/influenzaprinicples. This blueprint for action promotes investment in research and development (R&D) of new influenza vaccines, antiviral and antibacterial drugs, and diagnostics; public health infrastructure; communications strategies; health system preparedness and surge capacity; surveillance; and other areas of our public health, research and health care systems that play key roles in influenza preparedness and response. PAHPA reauthorization can provide federal, state and local agencies with the guidance and resources needed to make further progress in these areas.
PAHPA reauthorization is also critical to advance the development of new antibiotics and diagnostics to combat antimicrobial resistance. Antibiotic-resistant infections are a daily problem for our nation, and these life-threatening pathogens could be weaponized to create a widespread, deadly outbreak. For this reason, as we mentioned in our February 15th letter, IDSA urges PAHPA reauthorization negotiators to include the strategic investor, contained in the Senate version, in the final bill.

Once again, thank you for your ongoing leadership on bioemergency preparedness issues. IDSA strongly urges you to complete work on PAHPA reauthorization as quickly as possible. For further information, please contact Amanda Jezek, IDSA’s Government Relations Director at ajezek@idsociety.org or 703-740-4790.

Sincerely,

Thomas G. Slama, MD, FIDSA
President