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September 11, 2019

The Honorable Kevin McCarthy
Minority Leader
United States House of Representatives
2468 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Minority Leader McCarthy,

The Infectious Diseases Society of America (IDSA) offers our strong support for H.R. 2858, the Finding Orphan-Disease Remedies with Antifungal Research and Development (FORWARD) Act. IDSA represents over 11,000 infectious diseases physicians, scientists, public health practitioners and other health care providers dedicated to the prevention, detection and treatment of infectious diseases, including rare fungal diseases like Valley Fever. IDSA members are on the front lines of combatting these diseases, as well as promoting public health by working to prevent these diseases. IDSA members see firsthand the need for more funding, research, and surveillance for these neglected fungal diseases, and we are glad to see your bill works to address these topics.

The FORWARD Act addresses several important issues related to neglected fungal diseases. The matching state-federal grants would go a long way to encourage states to put money in research investigating endemic fungal diseases of concern geographically. Establishing a pilot program to more easily share clinical data for research purposes while preserving patient privacy would accelerate research on these diseases which are often in smaller patient populations. A more streamlined approval process for new antifungal diagnostics, treatments, and vaccines approved for human use would ensure that new discoveries could be implemented in a timely manner, especially in clinical areas where many alternatives are often unavailable.

Once again, IDSA greatly appreciates your important work on an often overlooked set of diseases and lends its support to this important legislative effort.

Sincerely,

Cynthia L. Sears, MD, FIDSA
President, IDSA