February 3, 2022

The Honorable Diana DeGette                          The Honorable Fred Upton
United States House of Representatives             United States House of Representatives
2111 Rayburn House Office Building                2183 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515                                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.\(^1\) 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.\(^2\)

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