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November 16, 2018

The Honorable Mitch McConnell
Majority Leader
United States Senate
317 Russell Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Charles Schumer
Minority Leader
United States Senate
322 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Majority Leader McConnell and Minority Leader Schumer:

The Infectious Diseases Society of America (IDSAs) writes to express our support for the Pandemic and All Hazards Preparedness and Advancing Innovation (PAHPAI) Act, substitute amendment to H.R. 6378, which reauthorizes and strengthens the Pandemic All-Hazards Preparedness Act (PAHPA). The programs and authorities contained within PAHPA provide essential resources for communities and health care facilities to prepare for and respond to public health threats. Further, PAHPA provides critical support for the research and development (R&D) of life-saving medical countermeasures (including vaccines, diagnostics, and antimicrobial drugs). IDSAs strongly encourages the Senate to act on this critical legislation as soon as possible.

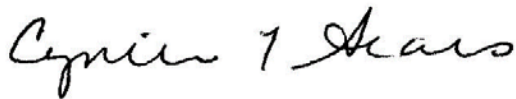
IDSAs represents over 11,000 infectious diseases physicians, other health care professionals and scientists. Many of our members work on the frontlines of public health emergencies, including bioterror attacks, outbreaks, and natural disasters (e.g., hurricanes that carry significant infectious diseases risks).

IDSAs is particularly pleased that the bill provides urgently needed new investment in the public health workforce, specifically the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) Epidemic Intelligence Service (EIS). EIS is a two-year on-the-job training program, founded in 1951 in response to the threat of biological warfare. EIS trains physicians and other health professionals in applied epidemiology enabling their expert response to public health emergencies. In fact, EIS provided crucial support for the 2014-2015 Ebola outbreak as well as the Zika epidemic, natural disasters, and human-made threats. EIS officers form a core group that goes on to serve in key leadership roles in public health. Unfortunately, EIS class sizes are shrinking. The 2018 class includes only 62 officers, setting the program back to the response capability of the 1980s. Additionally, EIS is experiencing a decline in physician applicants – only 30% of the current class is made up of physicians, while CDC projects that EIS classes should be 50% physicians to sustain the US public health system. IDSAs greatly appreciates that PAHPAI would renew CDC's authority to offer loan repayment to EIS officers, and we believe this will be essential to recruit needed experts to the public health workforce.

IDSA also appreciates that PAHPAI authorizes new strategic initiatives under the Biomedical Advanced Research and Development Authority (BARDA) to address emerging infectious diseases, pandemic threats, and antibiotic resistance. The antibiotic pipeline remains insufficient to meet the growing threat of antibiotic resistance, and we look forward to continuing to work closely with BARDA on this important priority. IDSA shares the hopes expressed by other industry and public health stakeholders that we can continue to work together to further expand BARDA's budget in order to meet our medical countermeasure needs.

Once again, IDSA strongly encourages the Senate to act on the PAHPAI Act as soon as possible.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Cynthia Sears". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Cynthia Sears, MD, FIDSA
President, IDSA

Cc: The Honorable Lamar Alexander, Chair, Senate Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions
Committee
The Honorable Patty Murray, Ranking Member, Senate Health, Education, Labor, and
Pensions Committee
The Honorable Richard Burr, sponsor, PAHPAI Act
The Honorable Robert Casey, sponsor, PAHPAI Act