July 14, 2025

Dear Senator:

On behalf of the Infectious Diseases Society of America and HIV Medicine Association, we urge you to oppose the rescission of $900 million from global health programs administered by the State Department (including the U.S. President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief, or PEPFAR) and formerly administered by USAID. These funds were already appropriated by Congress with bipartisan support. Not only do these funds provide lifesaving support to millions of patients across the world, they protect Americans' health and security by preventing infectious diseases from reaching our shores.

The proposed $400 million cut to PEPFAR would severely jeopardize access to lifesaving antiretroviral therapy for over 20 million people, significantly increasing the risk of treatment disruption and, consequently, the development of drug resistance, in addition to increasing HIV transmission and mortality. Developing plans to ensure the sustainability of highly successful programs like PEPFAR is important and should take place. However, efforts to transition PEPFAR or other programs from American support must be thoughtfully developed with partner countries; provide sufficient transition time; ensure continuation of prevention, diagnosis and care; and protect the most vulnerable.

State Department global health programs and USAID provide critical lifesaving services to combat HIV/AIDS, malaria and tuberculosis and respond to emerging disease threats in more than 50 countries. Funds support global health security, including our capacity to prevent and respond to antimicrobial resistance, strengthen health systems and help prevent outbreaks and pandemics. Cutting $900 million in congressionally-appropriated funds from USAID and State Department global health programs would result in the unraveling of health infrastructure in resource-limited countries that the U.S. has spent decades building, disrupt supply chains for lifesaving health commodities and weaken coordination on infectious diseases outbreaks across borders, significantly increasing the risk for outbreaks to more rapidly spread globally.

The proposed $500 million cut to USAID would result in the forced closure of thousands of health programs, clinics and vaccination campaigns. Cuts to Gavi, the Vaccine Alliance, in particular would result in increased transmission of illnesses like measles and polio, placing almost 80 million infants and children at risk for severe diseases for which safe and effective, routine, preventative vaccines are available. Since 2000, Gavi has supported the immunization of more than 1.1 billion children, helping to prevent an estimated 18.8 million deaths.

We also are concerned that the Administration has not provided accurate details on which programs would be impacted by the proposed rescissions and that members of Congress are not able to make informed decisions due to the lack of justification and clarity. The limited information released so far contains factual inaccuracies – for example, during a June 25 hearing in front of the Senate Appropriations Committee, Office of Management and Budget (OMB) Director Russell Vought referenced a $9.3 million PEPFAR program in Russia implemented by

John Snow Inc. (JSI), when JSI has never received PEPFAR funding for programming in Russia. In fact, JSI did not operate in Russia during the years that PEPFAR had programming in Russia, between FY 2006 and FY 2012. In the talking points memo for the same Senate Appropriations Committee hearing, Director Vought made the claim that PEPFAR "provides free health care to Afghanistan, Palestine, Venezuela and Yemen," when in reality, PEPFAR does not have any programming in those countries. These are just two examples of dozens of misrepresented or inaccurate claims made by the Administration in its justification for rescissions. The cumulative PEPFAR funding in the grants cited by OMB totals only $27 million – far less than the $400 million in proposed cuts.

As infectious diseases and HIV physicians and other health professionals who have been on the front lines of HIV, COVID-19, avian flu, mpox and now measles in many parts of the country, we understand all too well the urgent need to invest in global health and continue to improve global capacities to respond to infectious diseases threats before they reach Americans. We urge you to reject the proposed rescissions and continue to invest in global health as a strategic imperative for national security, economic stability and American leadership on the global stage.

Sincerely,

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President
Infectious Diseases Society of America

Colleen Kelley, MD, MPH, FIDSA
Chair, Board of Directors
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