

Lewis-Burke Associates LLC

Background on Federal and Congressional Efforts Related to Tick and Vector-Borne Diseases

To help inform and provide context as you draft position statements, we have prepared the below summary of White House initiatives, proposed legislation, and other efforts related to tick and vector-borne diseases. It is not necessary to respond to all of these items; rather, they are intended to help you frame the discussion.

White House Initiatives

White House and International Organizations Launch Global Health Security Agenda

On February 13, 2014 the White House joined the World Health Organization, the World Organization for Animal Health, and the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations in the release of a Global Health Security Agenda. The agenda seeks to mitigate threats from infectious diseases through prevention, detection, and quick and effective response. Nine specific objectives are identified in the international plan, including the need to address emerging zoonotic diseases and establish mechanisms for real-time biosurveillance.

As part of its contribution, the U.S. has agreed to assist at least 30 partner countries to build global health security capacity over the next five years. In February 2014, representatives from the American Association for the Advancement of Science, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, the National Security Council, the Nuclear Threat Initiative, and other organizations gathered for an event to formally launch the agenda. During the discussion, several of the speakers highlighted the important role of science in addressing global health security challenges. Information about the Global Health Security Agenda is available at <http://www.globalhealth.gov/global-health-topics/global-health-security/ghsagenda.html>.

ESA Responds to White House Request for Information on Innovation Strategy

On September 22, 2014 ESA submitted comments in response to a Request for Information (RFI) released by the White House Office of Science and Technology Policy (OSTP) and the National Economic Council (NEC) pertaining to the forthcoming update of the Obama Administration's *Strategy for American Innovation*.

ESA's responses focused on four main topics: pollinator health, vector-borne diseases, invasive species, and workforce development. The comments called for increasing federal investment in the development of innovative tools and strategies for combating vector-borne diseases – such as dengue, chikungunya, West Nile virus, and Lyme disease – which have become growing threats to human health in the United States. Regarding workforce development, ESA highlighted the need for a strong pipeline of scientists trained in medical entomology, integrated pest management, and insect identification.

Legislation

House Passes Tick-Borne Disease Research Accountability and Transparency Act of 2014

On September 9, 2014 the House of Representatives passed H.R. 4701, the Vector-Borne Disease Research Accountability and Transparency Act of 2014. Introduced by Representative Christopher Gibson (R-NY), the legislation would require the establishment of a permanent interagency Lyme and tick-borne disease working group, development of annual reports on working group activities, and the creation of a Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) strategic plan for Lyme and tick-borne disease research. The legislation can be viewed at <https://www.congress.gov/113/bills/hr4701/BILLS-113hr4701rfs.pdf>.

In response to the legislation, the American Public Health Association, Association of State and Territorial Health Officials, National Association of County and City Health Officials, and the Trust for America's Health sent a letter to House Energy and Commerce Committee Chairman Fred Upton (R-MI), Ranking Member Henry Waxman (D-CA), as well as Health Subcommittee Chairman Joe Pitts (R-PA) and Ranking Member Frank Pallone, Jr. (R-NJ). The letter agreed with the overall intent of H.R. 4701, but cautioned that language in the bill alluding to supporting minority scientific viewpoints could bias the Advisory Committee or potentially include non-scientific perspectives. They specifically caution including the minority view with respect to Post-Treatment of Lyme Disease Syndrome, which runs counter to the Infectious Disease Society of America's accepted guidelines for treatment. The full text of the letter can be viewed at <http://www.naccho.org/advocacy/action/upload/Public-Health-Lyme-Letter-7-25-14.pdf>.

House and Senate Introduce Lyme and Tick-Borne Diseases Prevention, Education, and Research Act of 2013

In February 2013, Rep. Chris Smith (R-NJ) introduced H.R. 611, the *Lyme and Tick-Borne Diseases Prevention, Education, and Research Act of 2013*. The bill proposes the establishment of a Tick-Borne Diseases Advisory Committee that would advise and oversee interagency coordination and communication with respect to efforts to address these diseases, communicate with constituency groups, ensure transmission of a broad range of scientific viewpoints, and advise relevant federal agencies on priorities related to the diseases. The legislation can be viewed at <https://www.congress.gov/bill/113th-congress/house-bill/611?q=%7B%22search%22%3A%5B%22h.r.+611%22%5D%7D>.

The companion version of this bill, S. 719, the *Lyme and Tick-Borne Disease Prevention, Education, and Research Act of 2013*, was introduced in the Senate and referred to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions. The legislation can be viewed at <https://www.congress.gov/bill/113th-congress/senate-bill/719?q=%7B%22search%22%3A%5B%22s.719%22%5D%7D>.

Other Efforts

Institute of Medicine Hosts Workshop on Vector-Borne Diseases

In October 2014, the Institute of Medicine (IOM) of the National Academy of Sciences (NAS) hosted a two-day workshop titled "Vector-Borne Diseases: Exploring the Environmental, Ecological, and Health Connections," following the September 2007 forum on the same topic. The purpose of this two-day conference was to highlight developments, research priorities, and disease preparedness with respect to vector-borne diseases. Panelists included representatives from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, American Red Cross, U.S. Department of Agriculture, Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation,

and other leading academics. Topics included: Global Warming; Dengue, West Nile, Chikungunya, and Yellow Fever and Challenges for Development of Vaccines; Transgenic Insects to Control Insect-Borne Disease; Agricultural Production and Vector-Borne Disease Outbreak Programs.

Of particular interest to ESA were workshop discussions highlighting the shortage of medical entomologists, as the demand for individuals trained to identify and aid in controlling vectors increases. Further, many guest speakers emphasized the need to increase entomological field research to better train the next generation of entomologists. The workshop announcement and full agenda can be viewed at <http://www.iom.edu/Activities/PublicHealth/MicrobialThreats/2014-SEP-16.aspx>.