

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

March 23, 2010

The Honorable Rajiv Shah, M.D.
Administrator
U.S. Agency for International Development
Ronald Reagan Building
Washington, D.C. 20523-1000

Dear Dr. Shah:

We are writing to bring your attention to the important need for more Research and Development (R&D) for new treatments of Neglected Tropical Diseases (NTDs). As you know, NTDs, as defined by the World Health Organization (WHO), are a group of fifteen parasitic, bacterial and viral infections, which continue to be a major public health and economic threat to the developing world. These are the most common infections among the 2.7 billion people living on less than \$2 a day. Those affected are often marginalized and forgotten by governments and left to suffer in silence.

Current U.S. government initiatives focus on a group of seven NTDs that have inexpensive, safe and effective treatments readily available, but the group does not include the eight other WHO recognized NTDs. Leishmaniasis (kala azar), sleeping sickness (human African trypanosomiasis, or HAT), Chagas disease and Buruli ulcer are largely left out of control and treatment programs because they are considered too difficult and costly to treat, the available tools are limited, and disease burdens are misunderstood due to inadequate diagnostics and surveillance systems. However, most of these diseases can be fatal if left untreated and have the highest death rates of all NTDs. It is therefore critical that we develop new treatments and diagnostics now in order to save lives in the future.

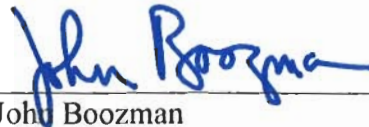
We applaud USAID's recent support for the inclusion of some R&D for NTDs in the Global Health Initiative. Existing health tools should be implemented more broadly for all NTDs, while still investing in urgently needed development of improved drugs, diagnostics and vaccines. We respectfully urge you and your colleagues at USAID to determine the best funding strategy to allow for proper resources to be devoted specifically to R&D for all NTDs so we can continue to work to control and eliminate these diseases around the world.

We look forward to working with you in the months to come.

Sincerely,



Donald M. Payne
Co-Chairman
Congressional Malaria & NTD Caucus



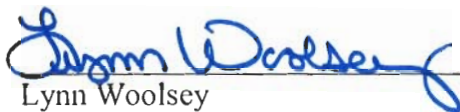
John Boozman
Co-Chairman
Congressional Malaria & NTD Caucus



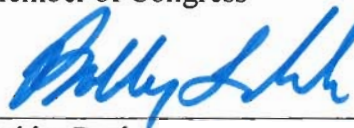
Henry Waxman
Member of Congress



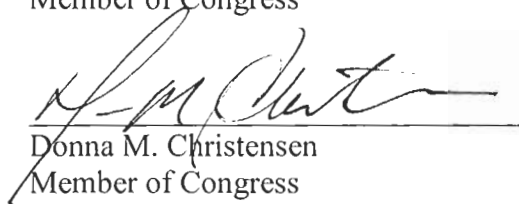
Eni F. H. Faleomavaega
Member of Congress



Lynn Woolsey
Member of Congress



Bobby Rush
Member of Congress



Donna M. Christensen
Member of Congress



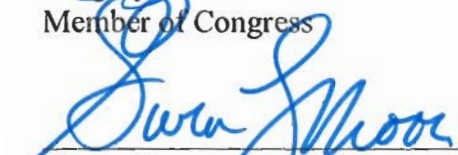
Barbara Lee
Member of Congress



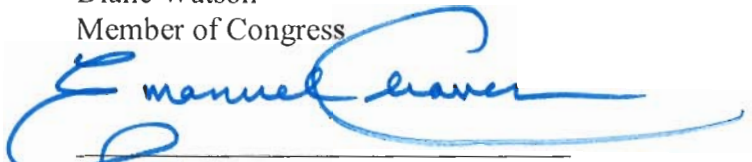
Gregory Meeks
Member of Congress



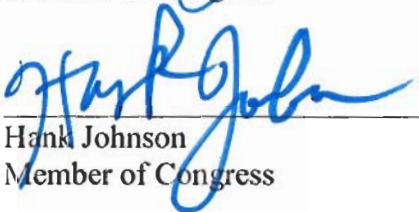
Diane Watson
Member of Congress



Gwen Moore
Member of Congress



Emanuel Cleaver
Member of Congress



Hank Johnson
Member of Congress