



September 15, 2016

The Honorable Mitch McConnell  
Majority Leader  
U.S. Senate  
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Harry Reid  
Minority Leader  
U.S. Senate  
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Majority Leader McConnell and Senator Reid:

ALAMEDA COUNTY (OAKLAND)

BALTIMORE CITY

BOSTON

CHICAGO

CLEVELAND

DALLAS COUNTY

DENVER

DETROIT

FULTON COUNTY (ATLANTA)

HOUSTON

KANSAS CITY

LONG BEACH

LOS ANGELES COUNTY

MARICOPA COUNTY (PHOENIX)

MIAMI-DADE COUNTY (MIAMI)

MINNEAPOLIS

MULTNOMAH COUNTY (PORTLAND)

NEW YORK CITY

PHILADELPHIA

SACRAMENTO

SAN ANTONIO

SAN DIEGO COUNTY

SAN FRANCISCO

SANTA CLARA COUNTY (SAN JOSE)

SEATTLE - KING COUNTY

SOUTHERN NV (LAS VEGAS)

TARRANT COUNTY (FORT WORTH)

WASHINGTON, D.C.

On behalf of the Big Cities Health Coalition (BCHC), I urge you to provide emergency funding to address the Zika virus threat at the highest possible funding level for an entire 12 months, without partisan riders. I also urge Congress to explicitly specify that FY2016 funds repurposed for Zika from the Public Health Emergency Preparedness program at the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) be restored. With 28 member jurisdictions, BCHC is a forum for the leaders of America's largest metropolitan health departments to exchange strategies and jointly address issues to promote and protect the health and safety of the 54 million people they serve.

Unless Congress acts now, the nation's public health system will be crippled in its ability to prevent the Zika virus from spreading further. Seven months ago the Obama Administration requested a \$1.9 billion in emergency supplemental funding to combat the Zika virus and ensure that agencies such as CDC and the National Institutes of Health (NIH) are prepared to respond to the spread of Zika and develop a vaccine.

Local health departments are engaged in educating the public and health care providers about Zika, conducting prevention activities through mosquito eradication; screening travelers from countries where the outbreak has surfaced, and ensuring pregnant women in local transmission areas have Zika testing available. With emergency funding for Zika, state and local health departments would be supported by CDC with increased virus readiness and response capacity focused on areas with ongoing Zika transmission; enhanced laboratory, epidemiology and surveillance capacity in at-risk areas and surge capacity to limit potential clusters of Zika virus in the United States.

If Congress fails to fund a 12-month Zika response, it may impact local transmission of Zika and the ability of local health departments to respond to the needs of residents in their communities. The costs of delay may well be seen in terms of both human suffering and economic burden to government health programs. Given that each infant with microcephaly may require at least \$4 million or more in care over a lifetime, the consequences would be catastrophic.

Thank you for your consideration of this request. Please do not hesitate to contact me at [cjuliano@naccho.org](mailto:cjuliano@naccho.org) or 202/783-3627.  
Sincerely,

Chrissie Juliano, MPP  
Director, Big Cities Health Coalition