



Chairman Tom Cole

*Subcommittee on Labor, Health and Human Services,
Education, and Related Agencies
House Committee on Appropriations*

FY 2019 Oversight Hearing on Biodefense Activities at the Department of Health and Human Services

April 18, 2018

Good Morning. It is my pleasure to welcome you to the Subcommittee on Labor, Health and Human Services, and Education Appropriations to discuss biodefense activities in the Department of Health and Human Services.

Over the past several decades, the frequency and diversity of disease outbreaks have increased across the world. Events such as the Ebola outbreak in 2013 and the Zika outbreak in 2016 are just two examples of re-emerging infectious diseases that required a quick, sustained, international approach to contain and eventually stop. These outbreaks remind us of the need for surveillance to detect outbreaks as soon as possible, training and resources to prepare to respond to such emergencies, research to develop vaccines and treatments, and the infrastructure to stockpile or quickly produce and distribute these countermeasures.

The threats America faces are not limited to those that are naturally-occurring. Terrorists and state actors who seek to harm Americans have demonstrated the ability to use chemical and other unconventional weapons abroad, and we know that many either already have the ability or are developing the ability to use biological, radiological, and nuclear weapons to harm us.

I am proud that Congress was able to expand its investment in HHS biodefense and public health emergency preparedness programs in the fiscal year 2018 omnibus. The omnibus provided a \$200 million increase for procurement of promising medical countermeasures in Project BioShield, a \$178 million increase to prepare for a pandemic influenza outbreak, a \$3 billion increase for the National Institutes of Health which includes expanded support for research on biodefense and emerging infectious diseases, and additional funding for cooperative agreements to

improve the capacity of state and local health departments and hospitals to prepare for public health emergencies.

While I realize your fiscal year 2019 budget request was submitted before Congress completed the fiscal year 2018 omnibus, I am still concerned that the administration's budget request for biodefense activities is inadequate to address the gaps in the country's preparedness for future public health emergencies.

I look forward to hearing about how HHS is making use of the significant new investments in fiscal year 2018 as well as how HHS will focus resources on its top priorities in the upcoming fiscal year.

Today's panel includes three witnesses:

- First is Dr. Robert Kadlec, Assistant Secretary for Preparedness and Response at HHS;
- Next is Dr. Anthony S. Fauci, Director of the National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases at the National Institutes of Health;
- Finally, we have Dr. Stephen Redd, Director of the Office of Public Health Preparedness and Response at the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

As a reminder to the Subcommittee and our witnesses, we will abide by the 5 minute rule, and before we begin, I would like to yield the floor to our Ranking Member, the Gentlelady from Connecticut, for an opening statement.

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