



House Committee on Appropriations; Subcommittee on Labor, Health and Human Services,
Education and Related Agencies
Public Witness Hearing

Testimony of Chris Frech, Co-Chair Alliance for Biosecurity

Chairman Cole, Ranking Member DeLauro, and members of the Subcommittee, thank you for providing the Alliance for Biosecurity this opportunity.

The Alliance for Biosecurity is the leading industry voice on biosecurity issues and is committed to building and strengthening the partnership between government and industry to provide solutions to threats facing our nation. We advocate for public policies and funding to support rapid development, production, stockpiling, and distribution of critically needed medical countermeasures (MCMs).

We must express our appreciation to the Congressional leaders, specifically this Committee, for a historic increase to one of the key biosecurity enterprise programs, Project BioShield Special Reserve Fund (SRF). We also appreciate significant increases to other accounts like the Strategic National Stockpile (SNS), Pandemic Flu, and the Biomedical Advanced Research Development Authority (BARDA).

The United States faces real, imminent threats from intentional chemical, biological, radiological, and nuclear (CBRN) attacks. Recent attacks, white powder incidents, the use of chemical weapons and the stated intent of state and non-state adversaries to use biological and chemical weapons all increase the risk that these weapons will be used against our interests and homeland. We must be prepared to respond to these attacks.

To prepare against potential CBRN events, the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) identified twelve Homeland Security Threat Assessments that could have a dramatic impact on the United States. The threats fall into categories such as CBRN or Health Security (like avian influenza or naturally occurring diseases), that threaten US citizens or economic stability. The Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) uses these as the basis for its enterprise wide plan to partner with industry to reduce, deter, or eliminate, the effects of these risks against our homeland.

In addition, the American people face serious naturally occurring potential pandemics and disease threats, such as pandemic influenza, Ebola, and Zika. Infectious diseases do not respect borders.

It has been long recognized that the government cannot do this work alone; an effective and highly functioning public-private partnership is the best way to prepare. The Alliance for Biosecurity members share a strong commitment to improving our national security as willing partners with the government.

This Committee understands that drug and vaccine development is costly, risky, and time consuming – it often takes over a decade and \$2 billion to develop a new product. A commercial market for MCMs does not exist for the needed diagnostics, therapeutics, and vaccines. Private sector partners rely on consistent and predictable government funding to facilitate future planning and maintain momentum in developing these critically-needed MCMs.

The critical federal programs in this enterprise that seek to enhance the United States' ability to respond to biological agents such as anthrax and smallpox or pandemic influenza include:

- BARDA

- Project BioShield SRF
- Pandemic Influenza
- SNS

We applaud the leadership of the Chairman and his comments, supported by other members, during last week's Biosecurity Hearing expressing a desire to build on the FY 2018 Omnibus levels with increased and sustained funding for biodefense and emergency health response. The Alliance for Biosecurity could not agree more that the enterprise requires such an effort.

Not only did the relative flat funding for these programs over the past decade ignore inflationary costs, it also did not allow the enterprise to evolve as quickly as desired to enhance partnerships that could better leverage new scientific opportunities to reduce our nation's risk in these areas as the threats continue to advance. The bottom-line is, a constant sense of urgency, vigilance, and uninterrupted funding for these programs are all critical to ensuring the United States is building and maintaining diagnostics, therapeutics, and vaccines so they are available for deployment in a public health emergency.

Specifically, the **Alliance FY2019 Appropriations Request is:**

- \$954 million for BARDA
- \$800 million for Project BioShield SRF
- \$632 million for Pandemic Flu Preparedness
- \$668 million for the SNS and the Administration's realignment of the SNS directly under the HHS' Office of the Assistant Secretary for Preparedness and Response (ASPR).

Mr. Chairman, Ranking Member, and members of the Subcommittee, we appreciate your attention to the country's critical biosecurity needs and the focus of last week's hearing as well as allowing me to represent the Alliance for Biosecurity in front of you today. We strive to serve as a trusted resource to Congress, the Administration, and the enterprise. We appreciate the close working relationship with your leadership, the Committee and staff. In addition, we appreciate those Members who participate in the recently created House Biodefense Caucus under the bi-partisan leadership of Representatives Anna Eshoo and Susan Brooks – our organization is proud to work closely with the caucus.

In closing, I want to leave a final thought. Public-Private partnerships of this nature are effective because they are based on open dialogue about the evolving needs and issues. Members of the Alliance for Biosecurity look forward to continued collaboration and open communication with you to ensure that our nation has the public response network, therapeutics, and vaccines available for deployment in case of a public health emergency. Thank you for this opportunity to participate in Public Witness Day and to continue to advance this dialogue.