



Friends of NICHD

Supporting the *Eunice Kennedy Shriver*

National Institute of Child Health and Human Development

May 20, 2016

Dear Member of Congress:

The undersigned organizations, members of the Friends of the *Eunice Kennedy Shriver National Institute of Child Health and Human Development (NICHD)*, urge you to ensure that research into pregnancy and birth outcomes related to the Zika virus is included in any supplemental emergency funding bill for the National Institutes of Health (NIH).

We all agree that funding focused on the virus' epidemiology, vector control and vaccine development to combat this emergent public health threat are essential. However, research into the screening, diagnosis and management of pregnant women infected with Zika is also urgently needed. The link between Zika and microcephaly has been confirmed by scientists, and as more information emerges about the range of child outcomes that result from Zika virus, **we urge you to ensure that the *Eunice Kennedy Shriver National Institute for Child Health and Human Development (NICHD) receives funding in any emergency supplemental to conduct biomedical, behavioral, and social science research directly related to Zika and pregnancy.***

Because the full extent of Zika's effect during pregnancy on both the mother and the baby remains unknown, we urge you to ensure that NICHD has the funding necessary to conduct research in this area while still being able to carry out its other crucial research activities related to women, children and families. We urge you to provide appropriate funding to address them. They cannot wait until vaccine development is completed, and indeed, vaccine development may not be possible without this important data on the virus's course and impact.

Research at NICHD has the potential to truly transform our understanding and treatment of the Zika virus. While the essential research on a vaccine to protect against Zika infection is occurring, in the meantime we must do everything we can to protect pregnant women from acquiring Zika and to understand more about the effect of the virus on the neurological outcomes of infants.

The President has requested emergency funding to engage in a full range of public health efforts to prevent transmission and educate the American people about how to protect themselves and their families, as well as to assist Zika-endemic nations in stemming the virus. We hope you will support a package that includes support for public health infrastructure, vaccine development and research related to pregnancy and birth outcomes. Without it, there could be dire consequences for infants and families for many years to come. Should you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact James Baumberger, 2016 Chair of the Friends, at jbaumberger@aap.org or (202) 347-8600.

Sincerely,

Academic Pediatric Association
American Academy of Pediatrics

American Congress of Obstetricians and Gynecologists
American Pediatric Society
American Psychological Association
American Society for Reproductive Medicine
Association of Medical School Pediatric Department Chairs
Association of Population Centers
Association of University Centers on Disabilities
Association of Women's Health, Obstetric and Neonatal Nurses
Consortium of Social Science Associations
Elizabeth Glaser Pediatric AIDS Foundation
Endocrine Society
Federation of Associations in Behavioral and Brain Sciences
Global Alliance to Prevent Prematurity and Stillbirth, an initiative of Seattle Children's
March of Dimes
National Association of Pediatric Nurse Practitioners
National Women's Health Network
Pediatric Policy Council
Population Association of America
PreemieWorld, LLC
Society for Maternal-Fetal Medicine
Society for Pediatric Research
Society for the Study of Reproduction
Society for Women's Health Research