



July 8, 2016

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

The Honorable Paul Ryan
Speaker
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

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

The Honorable Nancy Pelosi
Democratic Leader
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

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Dear Majority Leader McConnell and Minority Leader Reid, Speaker Ryan and Minority Leader Pelosi,

On behalf of Research!America, the nation’s largest not for profit education and advocacy alliance working to accelerate medical progress and strengthen our nation’s public health system, I am writing to urge you to provide emergency funding to combat the threat of the Zika virus. Congress adjourns for recess in only a matter of days, but the nation cannot properly arm itself against the oncoming epidemic without adequate resources.

There is no time to waste. Mosquito season is quickly approaching, and there are already 1133 known cases of Zika within the continental US, with over 2000 cases in US territories. As you know, this virus has been linked to several severe birth deformities, including microcephaly. These congenital malformations are often fatal and are difficult to detect, especially in poorer communities where adequate healthcare may not be available. This virus puts millions of women and children at risk – and the slower we respond, the faster the virus will spread.

Our nation needs to deploy the resources agencies like the Center for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and the National Institutes of Health (NIH) need for tracking, surveillance, and mosquito control, vaccine development, and other actions basic to stopping this public health menace. With needed resources, local and state public health officials would be able to respond with greater speed, targeting areas where transmission rates are higher. The funding would also provide increased support for pregnant women who are already affected, ensuring that their children are given a strong chance for a healthy life.

We are in the eleventh hour. The health of our nation and of those who will soon be born into it rests in the hands of this Congress. Please do not go into recess until legislation providing emergency funding for the fight against Zika passes both Houses of Congress.

Sincerely,

Mary Woolley
President and CEO

241 18th Street South
Suite 501
Arlington, VA 22202
P 703.739.2577
F 703.739.2372
E info@researchamerica.org