SUPER BUGS Act

Endorsed by: Infectious Diseases Society of America, Global Health Technologies Coalition, Cystic Fibrosis Foundation, Sepsis Alliance, American Society of Microbiology, Treatment Action Group, Christian Connections for International Health, MyCARE, American Public Health Association, IAVI

Rep. Mike Levin (D-CA) and Rep. Drew Ferguson (R-GA) have introduced H.R. 1305, the *Saving Us from Pandemic Era Resistance by Building a United Global Strategy (SUPER BUGS) Act,* which would establish a federal strategy for working with foreign countries, multilateral organizations, and other appropriate entities to help develop and commercialize new pandemic products, including antimicrobials and diagnostics.

➢ Background

Antimicrobials, including antibiotics, antivirals, antifungals and antiparasitics, are therapeutics used to prevent and treat infections, but with the increase of drug resistance, antibiotics and other antimicrobial medicines are becoming ineffective to treating infections. This rapid global spread of bacteria resistant to several drugs, which are considered "superbugs," is making infections increasingly difficult to cure with existing antimicrobial remedies.[1]

Each year in the United States, at least 2.8 million people become infected with bacteria that are resistant to antibiotics, and more than 35,000 of them die from these infections.[2] Antimicrobial drugs are intended for short-term use, making the development of new ones less attractive to drug developers. In December 2018, there were 42 antibiotics in the global clinical pipeline, of which only 11 were being developed to treat superbugs on the World Health Organization (WHO) critical threat list.[3]

Antimicrobial resistance (AMR) is becoming a larger problem for the United States military. According to the Defense Health Agency, servicemembers are at increased risk of exposure to AMR infections, especially in field combat wounds.[4] We must develop new effective therapeutics, treatments, and diagnostics to help treat resistant infections in servicemembers.

➢ Legislation

The bipartisan ***SUPER BUGS Act*** would help leverage U.S. resources to combat antimicrobial resistance and other future pandemics by engaging with the international community and seeking parallel investments in the development of antimicrobials, diagnostics, and other pandemic drugs. This bill would direct the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS), in consultation with the Department of State, to:

- Create a strategy on how to work with foreign countries, multilateral organizations, and other appropriate entities to develop and commercialize new pandemic or epidemic products, including products to address antimicrobial resistant pathogens with pandemic potential.

- Seek to enter into arrangements with foreign countries, multilateral organizations, and other appropriate entities to implement the above strategy.

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[1] World Health Organization, https://www.who.int/news-room/fact-sheets/detail/antimicrobial-resistance
[2] Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, https://www.cdc.gov/drugresistance/index.html
[3] Carb-X, https://carb-x.org/about/global-threat/
[4] Defense Health Agency, https://www.health.mil/Military-Health-Topics/Health-Readiness/AFHSD/Global-Emerging-Infections-Surveillance/Antimicrobial-Resistance