

Robert Kadlec, MD, MTM&H, MS  
Assistant Secretary for Preparedness and Response  
U.S. Department of Health and Human Services  
200 Independence Ave SW  
Washington, DC 20201

April 8, 2020

Dear Assistant Secretary Kadlec,

The undersigned organizations are writing to request that a portion of the \$27 billion appropriated to the Biomedical Advanced Research and Development Authority (BARDA) by Congress as emergency supplemental funding be used to provide support for antibiotics companies through the purchase of innovative antimicrobials to the Strategic National Stockpile (SNS).

Antimicrobial products are essential to any end-to-end medical response to pandemic flu and the COVID-19 pandemic that we are experiencing today. While there is still much to learn about COVID-19, evidence has emerged of secondary infections among coronavirus patients. It is unclear exactly how significant secondary bacterial infections will be in this pandemic, but serious viral respiratory infections typically pose risk that increases when patients need to be hospitalized or placed on a ventilator. In a recent study of 41 patients, 10 percent had secondary infections.<sup>1</sup> Of those, 31 percent were admitted to intensive care units.<sup>1</sup> Another report on 191 patients found that 50 percent of those who died had a secondary bacterial infection, and ventilator-associated pneumonia occurred in 31 percent of the patients requiring invasive mechanical ventilation.<sup>2</sup>

We are deeply concerned that our antibiotic research and development (R&D) capacity was already insufficient to meet patient needs before COVID-19. In 2019, two small antibiotic companies with new antibiotics on the market filed for bankruptcy. On March 16 of this year, the small antibiotic company Tetrphase was acquired by another pharmaceutical company for only \$14 million, despite having a valuable new antibiotic on the market. This extremely low valuing of antibiotics has caused nearly all large pharmaceutical companies and the venture capitalists that sustain smaller companies to exit antibiotic R&D. Funding to provide some return on investment for novel antibiotics, like through the post-approval support that Project BioShield provided to Paratek in December 2019, is an essential piece of the solution to prevent the collapse of new antibiotic development at this critical time.

We are excited to see emergency supplemental funding for COVID-19 be directed to BARDA to support the research and development of vaccines, therapeutics and diagnostics to prevent and

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<sup>1</sup> Huang C, Wang Y, Li X, Ren L, Zhao J, Hu Y. Clinical features of patients infected with 2019 novel coronavirus in Wuhan, China. *The Lancet*. 2020;395:497-506. doi:[https://doi.org/10.1016/S0140-6736\(20\)30183-5](https://doi.org/10.1016/S0140-6736(20)30183-5).

<sup>2</sup> Zhou F, Yu T, Du R, Fan G, Liu Y, Liu Z. Clinical course and risk factors for mortality of adult inpatients with COVID-19 in Wuhan, China: a retrospective cohort study. *The Lancet*. 2020;395(10229):1054-1062. doi:10.1016/s0140-6736(20)30566-3.

treat the effects of the novel coronavirus. We hope that increasing support for antibiotics companies during this critical time will promote research and development of new antibiotics to treat potentially resistant secondary infections in COVID-19 patients. We look forward to continuing to engage with you to find sustainable solutions that encourage private investment in antibiotic R&D.

Sincerely,

Accelerate Diagnostics  
Amplix Pharmaceuticals  
Association of Public and Land-Grant Universities  
American Academy of Allergy, Asthma & Immunology  
Association of American Veterinary Medical Colleges  
Center for Disease Dynamics, Economics, & Policy (CDDEP)  
Cystic Fibrosis Foundation  
Food Animal Concerns Trust  
Melinta Therapeutics Inc.  
Research!America  
Small World Initiative  
Society of Infectious Diseases Pharmacists  
Spero Therapeutics  
Pediatric Infectious Diseases Society  
Making-A-Difference in Infectious Diseases  
Michigan Antibiotic Resistance Reduction Coalition  
Microbion Corporation  
Qpex Biopharma  
The American Thoracic Society  
The Antimicrobials Working Group (Amplix Pharmaceuticals, Cidara Therapeutics Inc., Entasis Therapeutics Inc., Iterum Therapeutics Ltd., Melinta Therapeutics Inc., Nabriva Therapeutics US Inc., Paratek Pharmaceuticals Inc., Qpex Biopharma Inc., SCYNEXIS Inc., Summit Therapeutics plc, VenatoRx Pharmaceuticals Inc. and X-Biotix)  
The BEAM Alliance  
The Emory Antibiotic Resistance Center  
The Gerontological Society of America  
The Johns Hopkins Center for a Livable Future  
The National Association of Pediatric Nurse Practitioners  
The Pew Charitable Trusts  
Tufts Center for Integrated Management of Antimicrobial Resistance (CIMAR)