

Talking Points to Discuss How Reactive Vector-Borne Disease Policy Leaves the U.S. Vulnerable to Outbreaks

- First and foremost, acknowledge and thank Congress for passing the FY 2022 Omnibus Appropriations Bill that included \$54 million for Vector-Borne Diseases, including a \$12 million increase to fully fund the CDC regional Centers of Excellence on Vector-Borne Diseases, which were reauthorized in the *Kay Hagan Tick Act*.^{1, 2}
 - <<Check if the specific office voted in favor. If so, thank the legislator personally.>>
- This is a fantastic step in the right direction! Be positive!
- However, funding must remain consistent and at a sufficient level to maintain routine, reliable surveillance for diseases spread by mosquitoes, ticks, and other insects/arthropods.
 - Good public health is when there are no cases. The only way to stop an outbreak is to find evidence of the pathogen in the environment before human cases occur.
- A recent publication in the *Journal of Medical Entomology* critically reviewed federal funding for vector-borne disease prevention/control/research and found that funding follows outbreaks and/or high profile vector-borne disease that, while very important, impact relatively few individuals compared to other common diseases.³
- In short, once the disease returns to low levels, the funding disappears. Time tells us that routine monitoring is needed to ensure that a resurging wave does not reappear in subsequent years.
- This cycle leaves Americans vulnerable to new disease outbreaks.
- <<Make this problem real. Share a real-life anecdote about how insufficient funding has impacted you, the advocate, at this meeting. Make the story brief. Practice. Ideally the anecdote takes less than 60 seconds to communicate.>>
- To keep Americans safe, funding is needed during times of reprieve from disease outbreaks.
 - Need funding to perform surveillance to detect pathogens in the environment BEFORE cases begin happening in people.
 - Need funding to create a trained, diversified work force ready to respond when an outbreak begins occurring. Need trained people that can immediately act. The workforce needs to be diverse because diversity leads to innovation.
 - Need funding to perform insecticide resistance testing to identify potential problems with our current control methods to 1) prolong the life of those control methods and 2) make adjustments to control methods based on real-time data.
 - Need funding for research to create new surveillance and control methods.
- Acknowledge that the challenge is not whether or not funding these programs is important. The challenge is a finite amount of money and infinite number of causes. However, if COVID-19 has taught us anything, an outbreak can occur at any time.
- West Nile Virus and Zika Virus have taught us we cannot wait for the next vector-borne disease outbreak.
- **ASK:** Support the "[Prepare for and Respond to Existing Viruses, Emerging New Threats, and Pandemics Act](#)" (PREVENT Pandemics Act).
- **ASK:** Support any future appropriations of legislations with language designed to protect Americans from vector-borne diseases.
 - FOR EXAMPLE: Kay Hagen Tick Act **-OR-** Pandemic and All-Hazards Preparedness and Advancing Innovation (PAHPAI) Act
- **ASK:** Create new bills that provide funding to existing and new programs in the future.
- **ASK:** <<Any other asks specific to your organization that this publication may support.>>

1. Miller, R. and I. Goldstein. (2022). Congress Passes, President Signs Fiscal Year 2022 Omnibus Appropriations. NACCHO Voice. Retrieved March 18, 2022 from <https://www.naccho.org/blog/articles/congress-passes-president-signs-fiscal-year-2022-omnibus-appropriations>
2. ESA. (2022). Science Policy News: April 2022. Retrieved April 14, 2022 from https://www.magnetmail.net/actions/email_web_version.cfm?ep=lnw3Vv2fj1JTILGBTZqJJaJyGHxasN1MiHzFoKVn2i-PoKlzV8gEbVpRIG2LQg01KUgi3dL5GR6ioWButty4UiD0L9_B33eCTMU6W3A_bvMa5Ri2QLXsqx9muNQUG6L
3. Dye-Braumuller, K.C., et al. (2022). Riding the Wave: Reactive Vector-Borne Disease Policy Renders the United States Vulnerable to Outbreaks and Insecticide Resistance. *Journal of Medical Entomology*. <https://doi.org/10.1093/jme/tjab219>

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SPECIFIC DELAYED FUNDING EXAMPLES IF PUSHED (DIRECT EXCERPTS FROM JME PUBLICATION)

- **West Nile virus-** “Before the emergence of West Nile virus (WNV), no federal funding existed for arbovirus surveillance in the U.S.... However, in 1999 after the arbovirus was first detected in New York, congress appropriated annual funding through CDC Epidemiology and Laboratory Capacity (ELC) grants for public health departments to perform surveillance. Additionally, in 2003, the Mosquito Abatement for Safety and Health (MASH) Act was passed into law that authorized ‘grants through the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention for mosquito control programs to prevent mosquito-borne diseases...’. However, once WNV became endemic, funding for surveillance and control began to wane, and from 2004 to 2012, ELC supported WNV surveillance decreased 61%.”³
- **Zika virus-** In 2015, cases of Zika virus were reported in the U.S. “In 2016, the Strengthening Mosquito Abatement for Safety and Health (SMASH) Act was introduced as a bill in response to Zika virus and as an update to the MASH Act. However, the stand-alone bill was not passed into law and language from the bill did not get passed for three years until the Pandemic and All-Hazards Preparedness and Advancing Innovation (PAHPAI) Act of 2019, well after the initial threat of Zika virus had diminished. Unfortunately, three months after the PAHPAI Act was passed, the COVID-19 pandemic occurred, diverting funds away from VBD efforts. Ultimately, emergency funding in response to the Zika virus outbreak was obtained through a different route in 2016, but still after the outbreak had occurred.”³
- **Lyme Disease-** “The Kay Hagan TICK Act was signed into law in 2019 after former Senator Kay Hagan contracted and died from Powassan virus (POW) disease, and even though the original bill specifically calls out reducing the burden of Lyme disease, the success of passing the bill ultimately occurred after the legislation was tied to the high-profile impact of a re-emerging tick-borne virus. And while the threat of POW is real and justifies funding, incidence of endemic Lyme disease is consistently four orders of magnitude greater than POW.”³

1. Miller, R. and I. Goldstein. (2022). Congress Passes, President Signs Fiscal Year 2022 Omnibus Appropriations. NACCHO Voice. Retrieved March 18, 2022 from <https://www.naccho.org/blog/articles/congress-passes-president-signs-fiscal-year-2022-omnibus-appropriations>
2. ESA. (2022). Science Policy News: April 2022. Retrieved April 14, 2022 from https://www.magnetmail.net/actions/email_web_version.cfm?ep= lnw3Vv2fj1JTlLGBTzqJJaJyGHxasN1MiHzFoKVn2i-PoKlzV8gEbVpRIG2LQg01KUgj3dL5GR6ioWBuTty4UjD0L9_B33eCTMU6W3A_bvMa5Ri2QLXsqx9muNQUG6L
3. Dye-Braumuller, K.C., et al. (2022). Riding the Wave: Reactive Vector-Borne Disease Policy Renders the United States Vulnerable to Outbreaks and Insecticide Resistance. *Journal of Medical Entomology*. <https://doi.org/10.1093/jme/tiab219>