



May 11, 2020

President Donald J. Trump
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Ave. NW
Washington, DC 20500

Dear President Trump:

We write on behalf of the Infectious Diseases Society of America (IDSA), the HIV Medicine Association (HIVMA), American Society of Tropical Medicine and Hygiene (ASTMH), and the Pediatric Infectious Diseases Society of America (PIDS) to raise serious concerns regarding what appears to have been political interference in the scientific process with the termination of an EcoHealth Alliance grant that included a partnership with the Wuhan Institute of Virology (WIV).

Our organizations represent physicians, scientists and other healthcare professionals committed to infectious diseases, pediatric infectious diseases, tropical medicine, and global health. We were dismayed to learn about the termination of the National Institutes of Health (NIH) grant supporting an important international collaboration with WIV studying the transmission of coronaviruses from bats to humans, microbial genetics, and drug and vaccine development. Such studies are critical to understand the viruses, their transmission, and approaches for prevention and treatment of this dangerous illness. As of May 11, the current SARS-CoV-2 pandemic has resulted in more than 284,628 deaths globally, including more than 80,087 deaths in the U.S.

The grant from the NIH National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases was in its sixth year and was renewed in 2019 for five years through the NIH peer review process, which is the gold standard for identifying and supporting the most promising biomedical research without bias. Basic research completed under the grant has been critical to the evaluation of remdesivir as a treatment for COVID-19, the first drug receiving FDA Emergency Use Authorization to treat hospitalized patients. The ongoing work of the Alliance has become more important than ever to help prevent future coronavirus pandemics. Furthermore, the NIH has not provided a legitimate cause for terminating the EcoHealth Alliance grant, which was given superb ratings in its renewal evaluation. There is no scientific evidence that SARS-CoV-2 originated at WIV or any other laboratory, and the NIH has not responded to inquiries asking for additional clarification and rationale.

An independent and impartial scientific process and robust support for global research collaborations have been indispensable in making the United States the world leader in biomedical research and establishing the NIH as the world's premier medical research enterprise. Continued independent and impartial processes are absolutely essential to the successful development of effective treatments, vaccines, and cures for many infectious diseases and the epidemics and pandemics they can cause. This includes SARS-CoV-2, the cause of severe COVID-19 disease.

We urge immediate reconsideration of the termination of the EcoHealth Alliance grant, with assurances that politics will not influence the scientific process. A failure to set strong boundaries between politics

and science will set back future medical discoveries for years to come and leave the U.S. poorly prepared to respond to current and future pandemics. If you have questions or require additional information, please do not hesitate to contact Amanda Jezek, IDSA Senior Vice President for Public Policy and Government Relations at ajezek@idsociety.org, or Andrea Weddle, HIVMA Executive Director at aweddle@hivma.org.

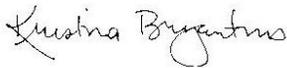
Sincerely,



Thomas M. File, Jr., MD, MSc
President, IDSA



Judith Feinberg, MD
Chair, HIVMA



Kristina Bryant, MD, FPIDS
President, PIDS



Joel G. Breman, MD, DTPH, FASTMH
President, ASTMH

CC: Francis S. Collins, MD, PhD, Director, NIH
Anthony S. Fauci, MD, Director, NIH's NIAID