

August 1, 2014

Senator Barbara Mikulski
503 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Senator Mikulski,

As you work to complete consideration of the Department of Defense Appropriations Act, we would like to express our thanks and appreciation for your long time support of the Military HIV Research Program (MHRP) at the Walter Reed Institute of Research. At the same time, we are writing to express concern that funding for the USMHRP HIV vaccine program is currently \$12.9 million lower in the Department of Defense Appropriations Bill for 2015 approved by the Senate Committee on Appropriations as compared to the Defense Appropriations Bill approved by the House Committee on Appropriations. We write to ask that funding for this critical HIV vaccine research be funded at the level approved by the House Committee - when the Conference committee meets to resolve differences between the House and Senate bills, or the two bills are reconciled as part of a continuing resolution.

HIV vaccines are one of the most powerful tools for tackling infectious diseases, and while the unique properties of HIV make finding a safe and effective vaccine one of the greatest challenges in science today, researchers at MHRP have made extraordinary strides in meeting this challenge. As you know, in 2009, the MHRP-sponsored HIV vaccine clinical trial, RV 144, demonstrated for the first time that an HIV vaccine was possible, reducing the rate of HIV infection in vaccinated volunteers by 31.2 percent. Today, the MHRP is part of an important international collaboration of the National Institutes of Health, the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation and other partners to plan follow-up trials to RV144 to improve the efficacy and durability shown in that trial.

MHRP is also a critical PEPFAR partner. While its primary focus is developing a globally effective HIV vaccine, the program provides prevention, care and treatment through PEPFAR. MHRP has become a leader in international efforts to combat HIV. With five sites in Africa and Asia, MHRP leverages existing in-country technical expertise and administrative infrastructure to expand partnerships with local researchers, health care services and NGOs to implement PEPFAR activities including providing 100,000 people with lifesaving medicines every day.

Through research programs, such as those underway at the MHRP, the US can dramatically advance science and play a critical role in stopping the spread of the AIDS epidemic.

Sincerely,

AIDS Action Baltimore
AIDS Foundation of Chicago
The AIDS Institute
The American Psychological Association.

The American Society of Tropical Medicine and Hygiene
AVAC: Global Advocacy for HIV Prevention
The Children's AIDS Fund
Elizabeth Glaser Pediatric AIDS Foundation
IDSA Center for Global Health Policy
International AIDS Vaccine Initiative
Georgia AIDS Coalition
Global Justice Institute
Health GAP (Global Access Project)
HIV Medicine Association
HIV Prevention Justice Alliance
Metropolitan Community Churches
National Association of Social Workers
National Center for Lesbian Rights
National Minority AIDS Council
The San Francisco AIDS Foundation
Treatment Action Group