

ONE HUNDRED FOURTEENTH CONGRESS  
**Congress of the United States**  
**House of Representatives**  
COMMITTEE ON ENERGY AND COMMERCE  
2125 RAYBURN HOUSE OFFICE BUILDING  
WASHINGTON, DC 20515-6115  
Majority (202) 225-2927  
Minority (202) 225-3641

February 1, 2016

Anthony Fauci, M.D.  
Director  
National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases  
National Institutes of Health  
Bethesda, MD 20892

Dear Dr. Fauci,

Pursuant to Rules X and XI of the U.S. House of Representatives, the Committee on Energy and Commerce is examining U.S. public health preparedness and response to the Zika virus.

The Zika virus is an emerging public health threat linked to a rise in babies born with microcephaly, a very serious condition characterized by a small head and brain. Over the last year, there has been a surge of Zika cases in South America, where it has so far infected more than 1 million Brazilians, been tentatively linked to about 4,000 cases of microcephaly, and resulted in 46 of these babies having died. In addition to microcephaly, health officials in Latin American countries are investigating whether Zika is the cause in an increased number of cases of Guillain-Barre Syndrome, a rare and sometimes life-threatening condition that attacks the immune system. The Zika virus is transmitted by the *Aedes aegypti* mosquito, which is also a vector for dengue fever and chikungunya, and can be found in the U.S.

With Zika now circulating in 24 countries and territories in the Caribbean and Central and South America, there is increased concern that the virus could reach the U.S. According to a new study in the journal The Lancet, the Zika virus has the potential to spread across warmer and wetter parts of the Western hemisphere as mosquitoes pick up the virus from infected travelers and then spread the virus to other people. Infectious disease models estimate as many as 200 million people in the U.S. live in areas that might be conducive to the spread of Zika during summer months.

The committee seeks further information regarding the U.S. public health response to the emerging threat of the Zika virus. We respectfully request a briefing as soon as possible from appropriate NIAID staff with committee staff. To assist the committee's inquiry, we would like the briefing to cover the following questions:

1. What evidence would show a causal link between the Zika virus and microcephaly?
2. What efforts are being made to obtain such evidence?
3. What evidence would show a causal link between the Zika virus and Guillain-Barre Syndrome?
4. Is the spread of Zika in the United States likely to be much more limited than in Brazil? What steps are being taken, or would be taken, to limit the spread?
5. What kinds of diagnostic tests are being developed to identify the Zika virus more rapidly? Is the NIAID currently funding any work in this area? If so, please detail.
6. How is NIAID ramping up the testing of therapeutics that might be effective?
7. What work are NIAID researchers conducting on vaccine candidates to prevent the Zika virus from infecting people?
8. Could any of the NIH-funded work for developing vaccines for mosquito-borne viruses similar to Zika be helpful for finding a vaccine for Zika?
9. What other kinds of Zika research are needed?
10. What is the nature of the experimental evidence suggesting that the Zika virus can be transmitted by Asian tiger mosquitoes (*Aedes albopictus*)? What further research is needed, and what is NIH doing to meet these research needs?
11. What are the most important research questions that need to be addressed to assist with the U.S. public health response to the Zika virus?

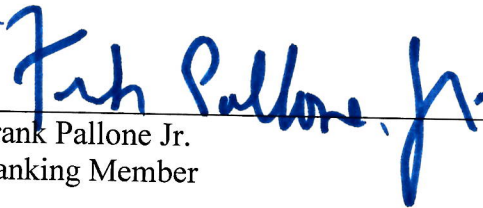
If you have any questions, please contact Alan Slobodin of the majority committee staff at (202) 225-2927 or Una Lee with the minority staff at (202) 225-3641.

Sincerely,



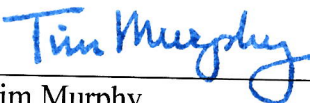
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Fred Upton  
Chairman




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Frank Pallone Jr.  
Ranking Member



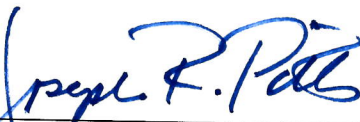
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Tim Murphy  
Chairman  
Subcommittee on Oversight  
and Investigations



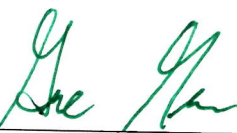
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Diana DeGette  
Ranking Member  
Subcommittee on Oversight  
and Investigations



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Joseph R. Pitts  
Chairman  
Subcommittee on Health



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Gene Green  
Ranking Member  
Subcommittee on Health

Attachment