What You Should Know

R&D is a prerequisite for global health progress. Past research and development (R&D) investments produced the drugs, vaccines, diagnostics, and other innovations currently used to address long-standing and emerging health challenges. Examples include HIV antiretroviral drugs; tuberculosis diagnostics; and vaccines for malaria, Ebola, and COVID-19. Despite these investments, health innovation gaps persist. Even if current global health technologies were widely scaled, our global health goals could not be achieved by 2030.¹

U.S. public financing is essential for neglected and emerging disease product development as there are limited incentives for industry investment. Scientists and product developers depend on U.S. public financing to make new discoveries and advance products to market that have helped shape the global health innovation sector. This support comes from agencies across the government, including the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID), the National Institutes of Health (NIH), the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), the Biomedical Advanced Research and Development Authority (BARDA), and the Department of Defense (DOD).

U.S. leadership in health innovation must continue through sustained funding. A supportive policy environment is required for the discovery and development of next generation health innovations needed for global health progress.

Congressional Calls to Action

Sustain or increase funding for global health research and product development.
Policymakers should provide strong funding for global health R&D across U.S. agencies, including USAID, NIH, CDC, BARDA, DOD, and the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA)—and to multilateral partnerships, such as the Coalition for Epidemic Preparedness Innovations (CEPI). U.S. agencies should prioritize support for global health R&D where they have discretion.

Direct U.S. agencies to improve coordination, alignment, and transparency of global health R&D efforts across the government and with international partners.
This includes providing agency reports on global health R&D activities, as well as creating and maintaining interagency global health R&D strategies.

Support inclusive innovation policies.
Inclusive innovation means product development that is led, guided, or informed by affected communities and local researchers at every stage, from priority setting to product rollout. This should include support for programs that strengthen the capacity of affected communities and local researchers to apply for funding and conduct health research. New tools should always be developed through a health equity lens, designed from the beginning for distribution, affordability, and use in low-resource settings.
Why is this investment important?

Millions of people living in low-resource settings are burdened by neglected diseases and everyone, everywhere is threatened by future global health security risks, including emerging infectious diseases and antimicrobial resistance. Often when new health products are developed, such as the first-generation COVID-19 mRNA vaccines, they are not designed for use in low-resource settings, where limited access to refrigeration, electricity, running water, health care expertise, laboratory equipment, and other resources can limit access to effective products. Global inequities are only exacerbated when these communities are not considered from the beginning of product design.

U.S. investment has historically been a powerful catalyst for the development of global health products that are designed specifically for use in low-resource settings. Since 2000, U.S. investments have helped advance over 100 products through the research pipeline. Many of these products have been approved by regulators and achieved significant impact. For instance, a child-friendly malaria drug, Coartem® Dispersible, the development of which was supported by USAID, has been delivered to over 50 countries and saved an estimated 926,000 lives.²

Through sustainable investment and supportive global health R&D policies, we can build a healthier future for everyone while preparing the world for future health threats.

Scientists and product developers depend on U.S. public financing to make new discoveries and advance products to market that have helped shape the global health innovation sector.
Resources


We need breakthrough technologies to reach the Sustainable Development Goal targets for health (Brookings Institution, 2018): https://www.brookings.edu/blog/future-development/2018/10/05/we-need-breakthrough-technologies-to-reach-the-sustainable-development-goal-targets-for-health/

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Citations