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Increased Funding for Biodefense and Preparedness Good for America

Washington, D.C. – The Alliance for Biosecurity applauds members of Congress for prioritizing biodefense and preparedness in the Consolidated Appropriations Act of 2016 by increasing funds for some key biodefense programs at the Department of Health and Human Services.

The Alliance is encouraged by the additional resources provided for the Project Bioshield Special Reserve Fund, which increased to \$510 million from \$255 million last year. The Special Reserve Fund is used to purchase medical countermeasures – drugs and vaccines – needed to protect Americans from national security threats. This significant funding increase will enable products to be purchased and readily available before a threat materializes. Additionally, funding for the Biomedical Advanced Research and Development Authority was increased from \$415 million in Fiscal Year 2015 to \$511 million for 2016, enabling BARDA to fund the development of additional needed medical countermeasures.

“Biosecurity threats can arrive at any time and in any place, and industry and government must be proactive to be prepared to respond,” said Paul Chaplin, co-chair of the Alliance for Biosecurity and President & CEO of Bavarian Nordic. “As the recent Ebola outbreak reinforced, when a health crisis breaks out, we must have a rapid response ready to go. The Alliance applauds this increased funding commitment so we can help the government meet its medical countermeasures requirements.”

However, while there are positive signs in the appropriations bill, the Alliance is disappointed with the limited funding made available for pandemic influenza preparedness. The \$72 million for Fiscal Year 2016 is well below the President’s request, Congress is significantly underfunding a top priority national security threat. A shortfall in funding for pandemic influenza preparedness again this year continues the significant reductions seen in Fiscal Years 2014 and 2015.

The Alliance looks forward to working with Congress in the year ahead to build on the increases for the BioShield Special Reserve Fund and BARDA to ensure that the United States is prepared for all biosecurity threats, whether naturally occurring or manmade. By preparing today, our nation’s first responders and health care workers will be ready to rapidly respond when a threat arises.

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The Alliance for Biosecurity, formed in 2005 to improve the nation's biosecurity through the development of medical countermeasures to address bioterrorism and natural pandemic threats, supports a long-term national security vision for achieving and sustaining defenses against a range of threats that present national security challenges.

For more information, visit the Alliance for Biosecurity website at www.allianceforbiosecurity.org.

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