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May 2, 2024

Dr. Kristen Honey  
Chief Data Scientist  
Office of Science and Medicine, InnovationX  
U.S. Department of Health and Human Services  
200 Independence Avenue, SW  
Washington, DC 20201

Dear Dr. Honey,

I am writing to request a briefing with you on the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS)'s LymeX Innovation Accelerator (LymeX) partnership with the Steven & Alexandra Cohen Foundation and the spending plan for the newly awarded funding in FY 2024.

The recently passed *2024 Further Consolidated Appropriations Act* (Public Law No: 118-47) includes a record \$5 million for the LymeX program. First established in 2018, LymeX has been instrumental in spurring innovation in research, diagnostics, and treatments for Lyme disease through a prize competition.

As the Chair of the Congressional Lyme Disease Caucus, I am committed to ensuring that we employ all federal resources possible towards fighting Lyme by advancing treatment and prevention and closing research gaps. With growing case numbers and increasing geographic spread in Lyme disease, the demand for new tools and treatments for addressing Lyme is more urgent than ever.

In February 2024, HHS and the Steven & Alexandra Cohen Foundation announced five winners for Phase 2 of the LymeX Diagnostics Prize, with the goal of accelerating the development of accurate and reliable Lyme diagnostic testing. Phase 3 of the competition began in April 2024 and involves planning clinical studies to validate the proposed solutions from Phase 2. I am extremely encouraged to see these exciting developments and know that through promoting collaboration among the patient, advocacy, and scientific communities, we can make real and meaningful progress in countering Lyme disease.

Co-Chairman of the following: Task Force on Alzheimer's Disease • Bi-Partisan Taskforce for Combating Anti-Semitism • Lyme Disease Caucus  
Coalition for Autism Research and Education • Congressional Pro-Life Caucus • Bosnia Caucus • Poland Caucus • Friends of Ireland Caucus  
Congressional Caucus on Human Trafficking • Vietnam Caucus • Congressional Heart and Stroke Coalition • Fragile X Caucus • Spina Bifida Caucus • Hungarian Caucus  
Malaria and Neglected Tropical Diseases Caucus • Hong Kong Caucus • Congressional Pediatric and Adult Hydrocephalus Caucus

The record \$5 million provided for LymeX in FY 2024 presents a remarkable opportunity for taking new and bold action in accelerating developments in prevention, diagnosis, and treatment for Lyme disease. To ensure that this funding is most effectively deployed in line with congressional intent, I respectfully request a meeting with you to discuss the specifics of the funding plan for the money awarded for FY 2024—and how Congress can best support and strengthen the LymeX program.

Additionally, I would like to request a copy of the report titled “Report to Congress: A Multi-Year Plan Outlining an Initiative to Conquer Lyme Disease” that the HHS Office of the Assistant Secretary for Health provided to the House Committee on Appropriations in April 2024. The insights from this report will be invaluable for informing Congress on the gaps that remain in combatting Lyme, and how Congress can work most effectively with HHS to enact meaningful policy changes and build on the significant progress that has been made.

I thank you for your consideration in this matter. Please contact me or my Legislative Assistant, Hannah So (Hannah.So@mail.house.gov) to help coordinate the requested briefing and materials.

Sincerely,



CHRISTOPHER H. SMITH  
Member of Congress