

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

October 12, 2016

The Honorable Sylvia Mathews Burwell
Secretary, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services
200 Independence Avenue SW
Washington, D.C. 20201

Dear Secretary Burwell,

We are writing to request that the funds made available through the Zika Response and Preparedness Act included in the recently enacted continuing resolution be disbursed quickly to affected areas without excessive administrative burdens.

As you well know, the state of Florida is ground zero for the local transmission of Zika. Following recommendations issued by the Centers for Disease Control (CDC), local leaders have been preparing for the disease, educating Floridians about how to protect their families, and spraying to eliminate mosquitoes for several months. The costs associated with all aspects of preparing for the spread of Zika and the ensuing complications have been significant and cover a wide range of activities. Educational materials, mosquito repellent, and administrative expenses, including inspections and employee overtime, are some examples of costs that local governments have undertaken to stop the spread of Zika. We would like to strongly emphasize that funds should be allowed to cover all appropriate expenses associated with Zika, from education to outreach, to treatment, without any bureaucratic hurdles.

It is absolutely crucial that those at the front lines of combating Zika receive reimbursement for the work they have done, and funding to continue to lessen the risk of others contracting the virus. Although the cycle of local transmission has been broken in the Wynwood area, which is impressive in its own right, there is still a much larger area of transmission in the City of Miami Beach. Funds should be allocated to the areas affected most by this disease.

In an emergency such as this, there should be no delay in the disbursement of funds. We would like to request a detailed timeline on how your agency experts to disburse resources to the state and local governments.

Again, we would to express our strong support for a rapid disbursement of federal funds so we can work quickly to continue eradicating Zika transmission. We look forward to working with you, and we look forward to your response.



Mario Diaz-Balart
Member of Congress

Sincerely,



Ileana Ros-Lehtinen
Member of Congress



Carlos Curbelo
Member of Congress



Frederica Wilson
Member of Congress



Debbie Wasserman Schultz
Member of Congress