

GLOBAL WATER

2020

*Dedicated Funding for Global Water, Sanitation and Hygiene at the
Centers for Disease Control and Prevention
Fiscal Year 2021 Appropriations*

United States House Committee on Appropriations

Subcommittee on Labor, Health and Human Services, Education and Related Agencies

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With coronavirus dominating the news, the importance of handwashing is front and center as one of the only effective ways of preventing infection. Both the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and the U.S. Surgeon General have touted the importance of washing your hands. More broadly, access to safe drinking water, sanitation, and hygiene (including handwashing), or WASH, is one of the first lines of defense in slowing the spread of most infectious disease outbreaks such as the flu and Ebola, as well as protecting communities, patients, and frontline health workers over the long-term. For this reason, Global Water 2020 recommends funding **the Global WASH program within the Center for Global Health (CGH) and the National Center for Emerging and Zoonotic Infectious Diseases (NCEZID) at CDC at \$10 million for Fiscal Year 2021. In addition, we support overall funding for the Center for Global Health at \$642 million and the National Center for Emerging and Zoonotic Infectious Diseases at \$699.3 million. Both of these Centers support global WASH programs at the agency.**

The CDC Global WASH program works to address the impact of WASH-related diseases such as cholera, hepatitis, and typhoid fever, by improving access to safe water, adequate sanitation, and improved hygiene in communities, schools, and healthcare facilities. CDC works to identify and scale up the most effective WASH interventions, using proven technologies to treat and safely store drinking water in homes, schools, and healthcare facilities, and the integration of sanitation and hygiene programs in schools and communities.

To accomplish this work, CDC partners with other U.S. government agencies, non-governmental organizations, Ministries of Health, and other international organizations. Through these partnerships, CDC provides the technical backbone to better understanding water-borne pathogens and assists countries with establishing sustainable and country-led WASH services.

In addition, the Global WASH program is critical to CDC's work to advance the [U.S. Global Health Security Strategy](#), as well as U.S. commitments to the [Global Health Security Agenda](#) (GHSA). Investing in WASH, and more broadly health systems, puts in place preventative measures that help countries to better prevent, detect, and respond to infectious disease outbreaks. WASH also plays a role in combatting the rise of "superbugs," or drug-resistant diseases, by preventing infections and lowering the need to use antibiotics.

However, there is a dangerous lack of WASH in many healthcare facilities around the world. One in four healthcare facilities lacks basic water services, one in five has no sanitation services, and two in five lack basic hand hygiene services. So during a time when people are encouraged to wash their hands to

prevent the spread of coronavirus, there are frontline health workers and other healthcare professionals, as well as patients, who are unable to do so. We also saw this during the Ebola epidemic in West Africa, where the lack of access to safe WASH in health care facilities and communities was a factor in the inability to contain the disease. And the lack of WASH in many health care facilities during this outbreak puts patients seeking routine services such as neonatal care at risk of infection.

Currently, CDC does not receive dedicated and consistent funding for the Global WASH program. The ongoing coronavirus outbreak and the focus on the importance of handwashing underscore the critical need to ensure that CDC can continue this work without worrying about where funding will come from every fiscal year.

Specifically, \$10 million could ensure that CDC's global WASH program could continue its work on:

- **Improving access to WASH in healthcare facilities to prevent disease outbreaks and the overuse of antibiotics through better infection prevention and control;**
- **Strengthening CDC's work to control or eliminate Neglected Tropical Diseases (NTDs) that are exacerbated by inadequate WASH; and**
- **Continuing CDC's work towards eliminating cholera as a public health threat.**

In addition, this request will help maintain CDC's efforts to identify the most effective WASH interventions and provide technical assistance in scaling up those interventions. And by leveraging the WASH investments made by USAID, multilateral banks, and non-governmental organizations, CDC is helping to make WASH interventions more efficient and sustainable.

We highly recommend that funding for the Global WASH program be new funding and not taken from existing programs at CDC.

Making investments in WASH now is critical to putting in place preventive measures that can slow the spread of the next novel coronavirus, Ebola outbreak, or the yet to be identified disease X and perhaps prevent multi-billion dollar emergency supplementals in the future. Access to WASH services is critical to protecting the health, well-being and resilience of individuals and communities. WASH is one of the most cost-effective interventions available for improving global health and development, which leads to more resilient and prosperous communities.