

**TESTIMONY OF
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THE AMERICAN NATIONAL RED CROSS**

**IN SUPPORT OF FUNDING FOR THE CENTERS FOR DISEASE CONTROL AND
PREVENTION (CDC)**

**SUBCOMMITTEE ON LABOR, HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES, EDUCATION
AND RELATED AGENCIES OF THE HOUSE APPROPRIATIONS COMMITTEE**

**UNITED STATES HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
May 12, 2010**

Chairman David Obey, Ranking Member Todd Tiahrt, and Members of the Subcommittee, the American Red Cross appreciates the opportunity to submit testimony in support of measles control activities of the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. We recognize the leadership that Congress has shown in funding CDC for these essential activities. And we sincerely hope that Congress will continue to support the CDC during this critical period in measles control.

In 2001, CDC – along with the American Red Cross, the United Nations Foundation, the World Health Organization, and UNICEF – founded the Measles Initiative, a partnership committed to reducing measles deaths globally. The current UN goal is to reduce measles deaths by 90% by 2010 compared to 2000 estimates.

Working towards this goal, the Measles Initiative has achieved spectacular results by supporting the vaccination of more than 700 million children. Largely due to the Measles Initiative, global measles mortality dropped 78%, from an estimated 733,000 deaths in 2000 to 164,000 in 2008. During this same period, measles deaths in Africa fell by 92%, from 371,000 to 28,000.

Working closely with host governments, the Measles Initiative has been the main international supporter of mass measles immunization campaigns since 2001. The Initiative mobilized more than \$720 million and provided technical support in more than 60 developing countries on vaccination campaigns, surveillance, and improving routine immunization services. From 2000 to 2008, an estimated 4.3 million measles deaths were averted as a result of these accelerated measles control activities, at a donor cost of \$184 per-death averted, making measles mortality reduction one of the most cost-effective public health interventions.

Nearly all the measles vaccination campaigns have been able to reach more than 90% of their target populations. By the end of 2008 all WHO regions, with the exception of South East Asia, achieved the 2010 goal two years ahead of target. The extraordinary reduction in global measles deaths contributed an estimated 25% of the progress to-date toward Millennium Development Goal #4 (reducing under-five child mortality).

However, at the height of global achievements in measles control, a sharp decline in commitments threatens to erase the gains of the last decade and permit a global measles resurgence. The Measles Initiative presently faces a funding shortfall of an estimated \$47 million for 2011. The American Red Cross, which has to-date contributed \$141 million to the Initiative, currently faces financial challenges that reduce the organization's foreseeable funding capacity. Current funding gaps have led to delays in mass campaigns resulting in outbreaks and deaths. Sufficient funding must be secured for measles control activities in order to achieve the 2010 goal and avoid a measles resurgence.

Since FY 2001, Congress has provided \$43.6 million annually in funding to CDC for global measles control activities. These funds were used toward the purchase of 415 million doses of measles vaccine for use in large-scale measles vaccination campaigns in more than 60 countries in Africa and Asia, and for the provision of technical support to Ministries of Health in those countries.

Your commitment has brought us unprecedented success in reducing measles mortality around the world. The CDC's support – made possible by Congressional funding – was essential to the achievement of the sharp reduction in measles deaths in just eight years. In FY 2010, Congress has appropriated \$51.9 million to fund CDC for global measles control activities. The American Red Cross thanks Congress for the increase in financial support from past years. We respectfully request level funding for FY 2011 for CDC's measles control activities to prevent a global resurgence of measles and a loss of progress toward Millennium Development Goal #4.

Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony.