

COVID-19

RESOLVE
TO SAVE LIVES

Vital
Strategies

Health Defense Operations Funding Ensuring We Are Able to Prevent, Detect and Respond to Health Threats



The COVID-19 pandemic represents an unprecedented threat to the health and wellbeing of people around the world. Many low- and middle-income countries, including those in Africa, have critical gaps in epidemic preparedness that put their populations at high risk for negative social, economic and health impacts of the pandemic. Regional and international support is crucial to their mounting an effective response to COVID-19, limiting death and social disruption.

"Never again. We should never ever be unprepared for something as catastrophic as what we are going through now."

- Dr. Anthony Fauci, NIAID Director

The U.S. Public Health System Has Suffered from Chronic Underfunding

The diminution of America's commitment to public health is likely due to many factors, but none more consequential than the lack of resources. Funding for public health protection suffers because there are many competing priorities, and has recently been the subject of strict budget caps and the threat of sequestration.

Core Capabilities of the Public Health System Must be Strengthened and Sustained

- **Prevent** and reduce the likelihood of outbreaks – natural, accidental, or intentional
- **Detect** threats early to slow or stop the spread of an outbreak
- **Respond** rapidly and effectively with an emphasis on public-private sector partnerships to speed the development of treatments, vaccines and delivery of supplies to save the most lives.

We Can't Afford Another Multi-Trillion Dollar Pandemic – We Can Afford Health Security

Negotiations for the budget caps were a pre-pandemic process. **Future health and economic security can best be achieved by a permanent budget cap exemption for critical public health functions to prevent, detect and respond to health threats both globally and domestically.** To ensure our long-term health security, we propose the creation of a Health Defense Operations designation.

Health Defense Operations (HDO) Designation

- Only applicable to core public health programs integral to health defense – must **prevent, detect or respond** to public health threats domestically and globally.
 - + Congress must specify which programs, projects and activities (PPA) are deemed HDO in the annual appropriations bill.
- **PPAs designated as HDO:**
 - + Will be exempted from the Budget Control Act budget caps to ensure the entire public health defense infrastructure can receive the resources needed to keep us safe.
 - + Will not be sequesterable for the length of the fiscal year to ensure health security.
 - + Will be required to submit bypass professional judgment budgets (Program → Agency → Congress) ensuring there is an unvarnished look at preparedness needs.

Our objectives



Flatten epidemic curve to decrease morbidity and mortality from COVID-19



Preserve essential services



Advance sustained global epidemic prevention

More info at

PreventEpidemics.org
ResolveToSaveLives.org
VitalStrategies.org

About Us

Vital Strategies is a global public health organization working in 70+ countries to strengthen public health systems. Resolve to Save Lives, an initiative of Vital Strategies, aims to prevent 100 million deaths from cardiovascular disease and prevent epidemics. Through its Prevent Epidemics program, Resolve to Save Lives is supporting countries throughout Africa and beyond to respond to COVID-19.