

ONE HUNDRED FOURTEENTH CONGRESS
Congress of the United States
House of Representatives

COMMITTEE ON ENERGY AND COMMERCE

2125 RAYBURN HOUSE OFFICE BUILDING
WASHINGTON, DC 20515-6115

Majority (202) 225-2927
Minority (202) 225-3641

August 11, 2016

Dr. Thomas Frieden
Director
Centers for Disease Control and Prevention
1600 Clifton Road
Atlanta, GA 30333

Dear Dr. Frieden:

Pursuant to Rules X and XI of the U.S. House of Representatives, the Committee is examining the CDC's Laboratory Response Network (LRN), a national network of local, state, and federal public health, food testing, veterinary diagnostic, and environmental testing laboratories that provide the laboratory infrastructure and capacity to respond to biological and chemical terrorism, and other public health emergencies. The more than 150 laboratories that make up the LRN are affiliated with federal agencies, military installations, international partners, and state/local public health departments.

Protecting the nation against a potential bioterrorism event is a high priority. To support this effort, the CDC LRN was established and became operational in 1999. The goal of the CDC Laboratory Response Network was to ensure that the nation has appropriate coverage and rapid detection technology and assays to quickly test suspicious materials and detect potential events suspected to be a result of bioterrorism in a timely manner to initiate immediate clinical intervention, surveillance, initiation of post-exposure prophylaxis, and other public health measures such as quarantine to save lives. The Project BioShield Act of 2004 was enacted with \$5.6 billion in funding to procure and stockpile appropriate medical countermeasures to support such medical mitigation.

The key to a successful response to a potential bioterrorism event relies on our ability to rapidly detect and diagnose suspected clinical cases. This task was clearly assigned to the CDC LRN for implementation and preparation of this aspect of the nation's biodefense. As part of the Committee's overall oversight of biodefense preparedness, the Committee seeks information about the current capabilities of the CDC LRN.

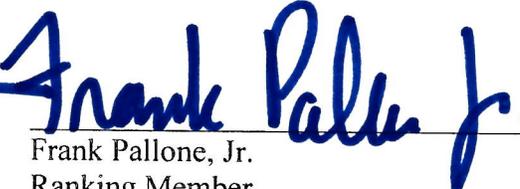
To assist the Committee, please provide the following information by August 25, 2016:

1. How many CDC LRN labs are there in the U.S.? What is their current capability to rapidly detect select agents and toxins?
2. How many assays have been developed to date to support this critical mission and when were they developed and deployed?
3. How many of the select agents and toxins are the CDC LRN laboratories across the nation capable of detecting?
4. What are the types of assays (PCR, ELISA, Culture, etc.) developed by CDC LRN and deployed? Please provide details as to the agent, the type of assays, their limit of detection, etc.
5. Please provide a detailed description of the process for qualifying any assay for deployment in the CDC LRN. Please provide details as to what each component or group within CDC or in partnership with other agencies contribute to this effort.
6. How many assays were developed and deployed through the Public Health Actionable Assay Program in collaboration with the Department of Homeland Security Science and Technology Directorate (S&T)?
7. Please explain the roles and responsibilities between DHS S&T and HHS CDC relating to the Public Health Actionable Assay Program.
8. Does the CDC LRN have the capability to detect emerging infectious diseases (e.g., Zika, MERS, Ebola, Novel Influenza, Chikungunya)? If so, how many CDC LRN labs across the nation have such capabilities at the current time? Please provide specific details as to the agent, the type of assay, and the labs that have the capability.
9. Do all of the CDC LRN labs have equivalent capability? If not, please provide the number of labs with their specific capability.

If you have any questions regarding this request, please contact Alan Slobodin with the Energy and Commerce Majority staff at (202) 225-2927, or Elizabeth Letter with the Energy and Commerce Minority staff at (202) 225-3641.

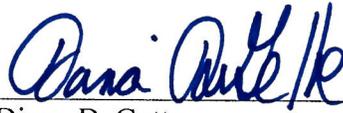
Sincerely,


Fred Upton
Chairman
Committee on Energy and Commerce


Frank Pallone, Jr.
Ranking Member
Committee on Energy and Commerce



Tim Murphy
Chairman
Subcommittee on Oversight and
Investigations



Diana DeGette
Ranking Member
Subcommittee on Oversight and
Investigations