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Friday, June 17, 2011

The Honorable Kathleen Sebelius
U.S. Department of Health and Human Services
200 Independence Ave. SW
Washington DC 20201

The Honorable Janet Napolitano
U.S. Department of Homeland Security
Washington, DC 20528

Dear Madam Secretary,

RE: Institute of Medicine (IOM)/National Research Council "One Health IOM Study/Report" Funding

We are writing on behalf of the National Academies of Practice, an organization of distinguished practitioners representing 10 different healthcare professions, working together to advance coordinated, accountable, accessible, affordable healthcare for all. We study and produce Policy Papers on health-related topics that we as clinicians find critical to improving healthcare. Papers have included topics such as "Access to Healthcare," "Health Workforce Crisis," and "Models of Accountable, Coordinated Healthcare Delivery." These comments are widely circulated to policy makers. Our consistent focus is promoting interdisciplinary care in order to provide the best health care and highlighting our topics in annual Forums and policy papers (<http://www.napractice.org/index.cfm>).

The disciplines of human medicine, veterinary medicine, and environmental health are not optimally synergistic in addressing the needs of the public, domestic animals, wildlife, and the environment. The relevant professions are operating without sufficient recognition of the obvious biological and ecological connections between human, animal, and environmental health. Since 2007, there has been wide recognition of the need to redress this problem through an Initiative that would integrate disciplines at many levels. Therefore, the One Health concept has been formally endorsed by the American Medical Association, and the American Veterinary Medical Association (<http://www.onehealthinitiative.com/>).

The National Academies of Practice believe that a coordinate One Health approach will facilitate health improvements in our population including:

1. Decreased risk of human food borne diseases by veterinary medical and environmental scientists assessing exposure of crops to animal feces in a coordinated program;
2. Decreased risk of antibiotic resistance, by restricting use of antibiotics in the food chain for animals and humans, through coordinated efforts between veterinary medical, agricultural, medical regulatory agencies and industry.
3. Decreased risk of transmission of diseases from companion animals to humans by cooperative patient-contact efforts between veterinarians and physicians
4. Improved surveillance for and responses to outbreaks of diseases transmissible from animals to

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humans by improving communication and collaboration between agriculture, health, and environmental officials;

5. Accelerated development of new drugs, vaccines, and diagnostics against diseases that similarly afflict humans and animals by coordinating medical and veterinary medical research efforts on disorders common to all species, examples being obesity, diabetes, and autoimmune diseases

In 2008, the Institute of Medicine/National Research Council (IOM/NRC) proposed to conduct a study of One Health, with the intent of exploring common educational needs for human and animal medical practice, untapped opportunities for mutually beneficial biomedical research, enhanced food safety through better networked human and animal care systems, and improved surveillance for both naturally occurring (and maliciously designed) emergent zoonotic diseases. In short the study would provide a roadmap for action and implementation that would be immensely beneficial to public health, agriculture and biosecurity.

Regrettably, adequate funding for this important study has not yet been obtained. It is estimated that the study would require funding of approximately \$1.2 million. We strongly urge you to find funding for this important study by the Institute of Medicine, and to encourage the relevant agencies in your Departments, including the Centers for Disease Control & Prevention, the Food and Drug Administration, the National Institutes of Health, and the DHS Office of Health Affairs to participate.

We would appreciate your consideration of this issue and initiate the necessary steps to provide funding at the earliest possible time.

Sincerely yours,


ARTHUR HAZLEWOOD, DDS, MPH
President


JOHN HERBOLD, DVM, MPH, PhD
President-Elect