



National Military and Veterans Alliance
5535 Hempstead Way, Springfield, VA 22151
Phone: (703) 750-1342
Email: naus@naus.org

January 29th, 2016

The Honorable Lamar Alexander
United States Senate
455 Dirksen Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Patty Murray
United States Senate
154 Russel Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Chairman Alexander and Ranking Member Murray,

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) estimates that 2,000,000 antibiotic-resistant infections occur in the United States each year and 23,000 Americans die as a result. Military service members are at particular risk. They now survive once-deadly combat wounds only to become victims of untreatable, deadly superbugs. Too many of our shipmates and soldiers have died because of these superbugs and, without swift action, more will meet the same fate.

On behalf of the National Military and Veterans Alliance, a nonpartisan policy and advocacy organization composed of military associations and veterans' organizations, we write to ask you to act on the Promise for Antibiotics and Therapeutics for Health (PATH) Act. The House passed similar legislation in July as part of its 21st Century Cures legislation.

We are losing the war on antibiotic-resistant bacteria and we are running out of time. Last month, researchers discovered a strain of bacteria resistant to the antibiotic of "last-resort," Colistin, in people in Asia and Europe. It spreads easily, so it's just a matter of time before it hits our shores. We are no longer on the threshold of a post-antibiotic era; we've entered it, and desperately need new antibiotics to escape it.

PATH's limited-population antibacterial drug pathway (LPAD) will spur antibiotic innovation by streamlining the antibiotic approval process for patients with life-threatening, untreatable infections. This pathway makes it more feasible — scientifically and financially — to manufacture life-saving antibiotics. LPAD drugs will meet the same safety and efficacy standards as any other drug under existing law.

Additional safeguards are in place: The drug's label will include a special FDA designation indicating the drug is only for patients with serious bacterial infections for which there are few or no treatment options, and the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) will evaluate how LPAD drugs are prescribed to ensure they are used appropriately.

We urgently need this pathway because drug-resistant bacteria infect our service members, veterans and fellow citizens at an alarming rate and these infections often resist the most potent antibiotics

The HELP Committee displayed leadership on this vital issue by passing the GAIN act in 2012. GAIN helped regenerate investment in antibiotic development and brought us closer to delivering new, life-saving antibiotics to the growing number of Americans who urgently need them.

GAIN was an important first step to addressing the dwindling antibiotic pipeline. Now we need to take this crucial second step. Please know you have our continued thanks for your efforts on behalf of America's veterans, their families and future generations. We commend your commitment to this vital legislation and urge its passage.

Sincerely,

American Logistics Association

Military Order of the Purple Heart

American Military Retirees Association

National Association for Uniformed Services

American Military Society

National Defense Committee

American Retirees Association

Reserve Officers Association

Army Navy Union

Society of Military Widows

Association of the United States Navy

The Flag and General Officers Network

Gold Star Wives of America

The Retired Enlisted Association

Korean War Veterans of America

Tragedy Assistance Program for Survivors

Military Order of Foreign Wars

Vietnam Veterans Association

cc: Senate HELP Committee members