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February 18, 2025

Dear Senator:

On behalf of the Infectious Diseases Society of America (IDSA) and the more than 13,000 physicians, scientists and public health professionals we represent, I write in response to the president's executive order (EO) "Implementing the President's Department of Government Efficiency Workforce Optimization Initiative." IDSA appreciates Congress' longstanding investments in federal health agencies and urges you to please request that the Administration exempt health agencies (or, at a minimum, positions that prevent and respond to infectious diseases) from this EO given their crucial role in public safety and take action to ensure that federal health agencies have the expert professionals necessary to carry out their critical missions. **Public safety, simply defined, is the protection of people from harm and disaster. It is impossible to have public safety without an infrastructure for public health, biomedical research and access to health care.**

Federal health agency work is cost-effective, preventing and containing infectious diseases (including health care-associated infections, antimicrobial-resistant infections, respiratory viruses, viruses with pandemic potential and more) that would otherwise be an even more significant burden on our health care system, including federal payers. The experts that make up this workforce are highly trained, which means we cannot rapidly put these professionals in place at the start of an outbreak or pandemic. Without sufficient staffing in place prior to the start of a public health emergency, our detection and response would be delayed, likely resulting in lives lost and significant economic impact with a greater number of Americans falling ill and missing work, school and opportunities to patronize local businesses.

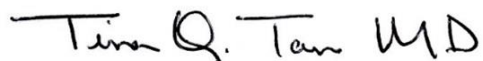
Federal health agencies carry out many essential functions that will be compromised if they are unable to maintain an adequate workforce, including:

- Surveillance of infectious diseases outbreaks in the U.S. and abroad, providing data that is essential to contain the spread of disease and prevent dangerous pathogens from reaching our shores
- Response to ongoing outbreaks (such as avian flu), natural disasters and medical emergencies
- Research to develop tools to prevent, diagnose and treat infectious diseases, including bioterror agents

- Public communications to ensure clinicians have the information they need to care for patients and individuals have the information they need to make informed decisions for their own health
- Access to vaccines and treatments to maintain individual health and prevent the spread of infectious diseases
- Information and tools to prevent health care-associated infections and protect patient safety
- Investigations into outbreaks of foodborne illness and recalls of unsafe food
- Administering lifesaving HIV treatment and care that keeps people with HIV healthy and stops transmission

IDSA recognizes the importance of responsible stewardship of taxpayer resources and believes continued investment in our nation's federal health agencies is unequivocally justified. Federal health agency activities that support the prevention, tracking and treatment of infectious diseases through public health interventions, research and patient care are smart investments that clearly protect people from harm, keep communities safe, contribute directly to the US economy and help contain both short-term and long-term federal spending. We are grateful that Congress has demonstrated wisdom for many years in making these bipartisan investments and hope we can count on you to protect them now.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Tina Q. Tan MD". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Tina Tan, MD, FIDSA, FPIDS, FAAP
President
Infectious Diseases Society of America