

ISSUE: The emergence and spread of West Nile virus, Chikungunya, and Zika highlighted our nation's insufficient preparation for responding to these threats. Our understanding of these and future diseases require support for continued research, development, and evaluation of tools to combat them. Training and research for vector-borne disease surveillance and control programs must be upgraded to mitigate the future impacts of additional exotic vector-borne diseases.

Background: The Strengthening Mosquito Abatement for Safety and Health (SMASH) Act, included as section 607 of the Pandemic and All-Hazards Preparedness and Advancing Innovation Act of 2019 (P.L. 116-22) reauthorized the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) resources to be used to address emerging infectious mosquito-borne disease and improve existing control programs for the protection of public health in our nation. Specifically, the measure expands and extends authorization for \$100 million in annual grants for mosquito prevention, control, and response programs. Funding for the provisions of the SMASH Act at the full authorized level is the American Mosquito Control Association's highest priority.

Committee report language that accompanied the final appropriations bill for the FY'22 encouraged CDC to support mosquito control activities authorized by the SMASH Act. The report language also references Vector-Borne disease's account being used to fund Tick Act activities. As it stands, *no* funding is directly available through discretionary/competitive grants through the CDC.

The provisions of the SMASH Act are necessary to ensure mosquito-borne endemics are addressed appropriately every year. COVID-19 demonstrated how resources are shifted from one public health emergency to another, leaving communities across the country—particularly underserved, rural, and minority communities—vulnerable to long-term threats from vector-borne diseases.

Funding public health agencies with resources, authorized by the SMASH Act, and appropriated through existing line items such as the CDC's divisions of **Epidemiology and Laboratory Capacity** or **Vector-Borne Diseases**, which are part of the Emerging and Zoonotic Infectious Diseases provision, will allow local health officials and staff to meet the challenges of lethal mosquito-borne illnesses.

Discussion: The SMASH Act supports the CDC's "National Public Health Framework for the Prevention and Control of Vector-Borne Diseases in Humans" mission to protect people from illness, suffering, and death due to vector-borne diseases. Once the national strategy is put into action, local public health officials will need resources for data modernization, disease monitoring, public education, and disease prevention. Without support at the local level, our nation will continue to be reactive in responding to emerging vector-borne diseases, when we should be proactive.

- The SMASH Act authorizes \$100 million annually in grants for mosquito control programs to prevent and control mosquito-borne diseases for FY 2021 through FY 2023.
- The SMASH Act directed that coordination grants to states and political subdivisions be expanded to address "emerging, infectious mosquito-borne diseases" and to "improve existing control programs." Grant preference is now given to those with an emerging infectious mosquito-borne disease that presents a "serious public health threat or a public health emergency due to the incidence or prevalence of a mosquito-borne disease that presents a serious public health threat."

NEEDED ACTIONS:

Pass and fully fund all provisions of the current approved and authorized Strengthening Mosquito Abatement for Safety and Health (SMASH) Act to enhance and increase funding available for the Centers for Disease Control (CDC) Divisions of Vector-Borne Diseases, and Epidemiology and Laboratory Capacity (included within the provision for Emerging and Zoonotic Infectious Diseases), with direction to increase support for mosquito surveillance and control activities.