

scratch with a new compound)—far more than many of these small companies and nonprofit entities have the capacity to invest.

Public funds are necessary to fill in the gaps in the research and development process and to create incentives for greater investment by private industry. Without federal leadership and funding, a microbicide is not likely to be available anytime soon.

Despite scientific promise and public health need, investment in microbicide research has been woefully inadequate. Through the work of the National Institutes of Health, non-profit research institutions, and small private companies, a number of microbicide products are poised for successful development. Some 24 products are currently in or ready for clinical (human) trials and 36 promising compounds exist that could be investigated further. But this "pipeline" will only be unblocked if the federal government helps support the necessary safety and efficacy testing necessary to move the best candidates to the marketplace.

Public health officials and members of Congress need to take notice. Given the growing number of promising microbicides in development, we have everything we need to bring a microbicide to market within five years—except the money. That's why Representative NANCY PELOSI and I are introducing legislation today that increases the federal investment in this potentially life-saving technology. Specifically, our bill, the "STD Microbicide Development Act of 2000," does the following:

Instructs the Director of the National Institutes of Health to establish a program to support research to develop microbicides, including expanding and intensifying basic research on the initial mechanisms of STD infection, identifying appropriate models for evaluating safety and efficacy of microbicidal products, enhancing clinical trials, and expanding behavioral research on use, acceptability and compliance with microbicides.

Instructs the NIH Director, in consultation with all relevant NIH institutes and federal agencies, to develop a 5-year implementation plan regarding the microbicides research program.

Authorizes \$50 million in FY 2001, \$75 million in FY 2002, and \$100 million in FY 2003 for federal microbicide research and development.

Mr. Speaker, thanks to the leadership of Leslie Wolfe and the Center for Women Policy Studies who first brought the need for microbicides research to my attention, I introduced Women and HIV/AIDS research and prevention legislation back in 1990. Congress has confirmed the importance of microbicides research by including report language I submitted during the appropriations process calling for greater NIH attention to this research. Now that the reality of a microbicide is much closer, more resources and greater coordination of federal research is urgently needed. With vigorous attention and sustained investment, a microbicide could be available within five years.

Microbicides represent another potential weapon in the arsenal against HIV/AIDS and STDs. Microbicides would be an important complement to potential HIV vaccines since they are likely to be available sooner, will be easier and cheaper to distribute, and will be

effective against a range of sexually transmitted infections. They are particularly important for women, whose risk of infection is high and whose direct control over existing prevention options is low.

Microbicides will give women all over the world one more way of protecting themselves against the ravage of HIV/AIDS and other STDs. I urge all of my colleagues to support the important legislation we are introducing today, and give women and their families a fighting chance against the HIV and STD epidemics. Women in this country and around the world, as well as their partners and children, desperately need and deserve more options to stop the spread of deadly infections.

GULF WAR ILLNESSES

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Washington (Mr. METCALF) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. METCALF. Mr. Speaker, America has been built by the bravery and sacrifice of patriots. Every freedom that America stands for, has been fought for by brave American men and women. Exactly 135 years ago this week, Abraham Lincoln stood on the east steps of this grand Capitol building and delivered his second inaugural address. Thousands stood in silent attention as he delivered his concluding paragraph:

With malice toward none; with charity for all; with firmness in the right as God gives us to see the right, let us strive on to finish the work we are in; to bind up the Nation's wounds; to care for him who shall have borne the battle, and for his widow and his orphan, to do all which may achieve and cherish a just and lasting peace among ourselves and with all nations.

Mr. Speaker, there is nothing more important our country can do than bind up the wounds of those who fight for the freedom of all Americans. We must fulfill the promises we have made to our sons and daughters who have put on the uniform of this country.

In 1991, American troops began coming down with an alarming spectrum of maladies which soon became known as Gulf War illnesses. These valiant soldiers offered their lives in service to America. They deserve every effort by their government to answer questions about what might have made them sick. They deserve every effort by their government to try to find treatment for their illnesses.

But what is really happening? Unfortunately, some in government have given the appearance that they will do everything in their power to block the answers to the questions and to block the search for treatments. A recent scientific, peer-reviewed study showed an overwhelmingly large number of tested veterans suffering from Gulf War illnesses are testing positive for antibodies to squalene. This study, "Antibodies to Squalene in Gulf War Syndrome," was recently published in the

February 2000 issue of *Experimental and Molecular Pathology*. On January 31, I and nine of my House colleagues sent a letter requesting that the Department of Defense do an objective analysis of this study. We had great hope for that test, that this study might prove to be a breakthrough that would lead to better treatments for suffering Gulf War era veterans.

While waiting for a response to our request, I discovered that the Department of Defense was misrepresenting and attacking the article on its own Anthrax Vaccination Inoculation Program Web site, AVIP. In one section, AVIP even claimed that the conclusions derived from the test results in the study had no scientific basis. The results of a peer-reviewed study published in a scientific journal have no scientific basis? This is an outrageous statement. Our DOD is obviously stonewalling this issue. Therefore, I sent a letter to Secretary Cohen requesting that the inaccurate AVIP statements be removed. DOD needs to do this immediately.

Last week, DOD delivered the response requested by myself and my nine colleagues. I had hoped that DOD would seize this opportunity to conduct a legitimate, thorough inquiry of the scientific, peer-reviewed study. Instead, we were provided irrelevant material and an anonymous half-page analysis. It is difficult to imagine that DOD would expect Congress to accept a half-page anonymously written analysis as an appropriate response to our request. The main point of our letter was completely ignored.

Mr. Speaker, we need answers and action from DOD, not a maze of smoke and mirrors. The people's representatives are asking for answers from Secretary Cohen, and all we are getting is stonewalling and bureaucratic delay tactics. How can DOD expect to regain the seriously eroded trust of its military personnel if misrepresentations posted on the official Web site are allowed to go unchallenged and congressional requests for legitimate information are stonewalled?

Mr. Speaker, Secretary Cohen must intervene to halt the misinformation campaign being waged by DOD officials concerning issues surrounding antibodies to squalene research. He must provide Members of Congress and those suffering from Gulf War illnesses the real answer. The Department of Defense must stop this deadly game of delay and distraction—many of our veterans are dying and thousands more are suffering indescribable agonies.

Mr. Speaker, as Abraham Lincoln said 135 years ago just a short distance from this House floor, let us "care for him who shall have born the battle." Congress must do whatever is necessary to get the care needed to our suffering Gulf War-era veterans.