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Comments submitted to the National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine Workshop on Potential Research Priorities to Inform Readiness and Response to Highly Pathogenic Avian Influenza A

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The Infectious Diseases Society of America (IDSA) represents more than 13,000 physicians, scientists, public health practitioners and other clinicians specializing in infectious diseases (ID) prevention, care, research and education. The continued response to H5N1 highly pathogenic avian influenza (HPAI) requires strong coordination across a wide array of relevant public health topics.

IDSA continues to stress the importance of strengthening support for medical countermeasures and vaccines for the ongoing HPAI outbreak. There is an urgent need to understand prioritization for screening and testing in at risk populations. In addition, the areas below should be prioritized as research to inform the response to HPAI moves forward.

IDSA supports the H5N1 Research Priorities released by the Department of Health and Human Services. We continue to stress the need to understand the pathogenesis, symptoms, and transmission of H5N1, specifically the One Health concerns raised by zoonotic transmission through various routes. In addition, we underscore the importance of the research priorities below in the response to H5N1:

- Determining the possibility of H5N1 transmission through aerosolized mucosal virus, aerosolized virus laden milk, and other transmission paths.
 - Developing our understanding of potential human-to-human transmission especially among co-workers and household contacts.
- Continuing to investigate the safety and viral prevalence in dairy products.
- Understanding the neutralizing effect of the currently available vaccines against the circulating H5N1 virus.
 - Any clinical trials testing the efficacy of vaccines developed against H5N1 should include pregnant people, children, people over 65, and immunocompromised people.
- Exploring effective rapid diagnostics, pre-exposure prophylaxis and antivirals, and vaccines.
 - Investigate activity of current flu drugs, adequacy of supply, efficacy of parenteral administration.

- Expanding our understanding of personal protective equipment in various settings.
- Conducting research on the most effective strategies to reach vulnerable populations, as well as the general public, to educate and advise on H5N1 and other possible flu outbreaks.
 - Novel ways to dispense antivirals and/or vaccinate at risk populations including telemedicine and alternate delivery modes are critical.
 - Lessons learned from administration of the COVID vaccine, including communication science, should be incorporated into the response.

IDSA appreciates the leadership shown by NASEM in responding to the H5N1 outbreak. Please contact Eli Briggs, IDSA director of public policy, at ebriggs@idsociety.org, with any questions.