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## International Society for Infectious Diseases: Position statement on the March for Science, April 22, 2017

For more than thirty years, the International Society for Infectious Diseases (ISID) has been committed to the advancement of evidence-based scientific practices that further public health initiatives and the prevention of infectious diseases. On 22nd April 2017, people around the world will take part in the “March for Science” to demonstrate their support for informed reasoning. In light of the current political climate, which at times seeks to undermine scientific truths, ISID fully endorses the March for Science. We reaffirm our commitment to scientific progress with its goal of improving the health of all peoples.

ISID supports and promotes the exchange of information and best-practices amongst the international infectious disease community to aid research and inform local, national, and global policy decisions. The Society's activities are at the forefront of evidence-based prevention and treatment of infectious diseases and the rapid identification of outbreak events. These activities rely upon support for the global scientific community, open lines of communication that are free of political constraint, and the unrestricted movement of scientists and healthcare professionals.

Policy makers, beholden to the public, must be informed of the latest scientific research as they create legislation, establish new programs, and allocate funding which directly and indirectly affects the health of their constituents. *Science denialism and the mischaracterization of substantiated research poses a severe threat to the progress made by public health and medical professionals in the fight against infectious diseases.* For example, the unequivocal success of vaccines cannot be denied as they have reduced the global burden of disease, particularly the mortality rate in children under five, and have eradicated both smallpox and rinderpest. The development of health policy based on peer-reviewed research and the founding of sufficiently funded agencies tasked with safeguarding human and environmental well-being, are hallmarks of modern public health. To prevent and control infectious diseases, we must remain vigilant in defending and sustaining these practices.

Recognizing that infectious diseases cross all political and geographic boundaries, effective long-term solutions to understand, monitor, and control emerging and re-emerging disease outbreaks necessitate global scientific information exchange and cooperation. All aspects of scientific research, including the search for new antibiotics to combat bacterial resistance, investigation of disease outbreaks such as Ebola and Zika, and robust data analysis, are required to reduce health disparities. Research efforts need to include investigators from minority groups and those from under-resourced settings to ensure interventions are culturally sensitive and successful within their target population.

The unwavering support for the sciences and those who dedicate their lives to scientific endeavors is the only way to achieve improved health on a global scale. ISID remains committed to the physicians and public health professionals working to lessen the damaging health consequences associated with the undermining of scientific inquiry. Only through informed discussions, evidence-based decisions, and effective, ethical, and culturally sensitive implementation, can we advance the health of our planet and all who inhabit it.

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