September 6, 2016

Honorable Secretary of State John F. Kerry
United States Department of State
2201 C Street NW
Washington, D.C. 20520

Dear Secretary Kerry:

We are writing on behalf of the below organizations to express our deep concern that policies that facilitate access to today’s medicines and provide vital incentives (like standards and rules in trade agreements, and intellectual property protection) for the development of new treatments and cures may be at risk due to current United Nations initiatives.

Our organizations are committed to improving the health and quality of life of patients in the U.S. and around the world. The promise of future medical breakthroughs brings our patients hope that one day researchers will find a cure that allows them to lead longer, healthier and more productive lives.

We understand that innovative medicines change patient lives and directly address our global health challenges. We believe that the recent initiative by United Nations (UN) Secretary General Ban Ki-Moon and the UN High Level Panel on Access to Medicines (UNHLP) could lead to declining investments in R&D, and in turn deprive patients worldwide of critical advances and breakthroughs. The UNHLP’s mandate expressly excludes from consideration the major health system challenges that hinder access to medicines, including lack of adequate healthcare infrastructure, weak supply chains and shortages of skilled healthcare professionals. All of these factors must be taken into account to deliver practical and truly sustainable solutions.

The United States, a country with one of the strongest and most robust IP protection regimes in the world, also leads the world in the development and launch of life saving medicines. These two factors are intrinsically linked. Given the significant cost and risks associated with developing innovative medicines, we must provide innovators with incentives that reward the cutting edge pharmaceutical research and discovery for which they are responsible. U.S. leadership will be essential to ensuring the future of innovative medicines. We also appreciate the State Department’s submission to the UN High-Level Panel and encourage you to stay engaged and make sure the Panel’s recommendations do not lead to harmful policy proposals.

We know that there are real barriers to access to innovative medicines worldwide, and we want our life sciences industry to continue to be a proactive partner in addressing these barriers with constructive solutions. For that reason and others, we urge you to help safeguard a global environment for life sciences that spurs innovation, including through IP protection. Decades of research and data analysis by health economists, public health experts, the life sciences industry and government departments have established the fact that strong IP protection is one of the best ways to promote access and ensure the continued development and deployment of innovative medicines here at home and globally.
Thank you for your time and attention to advancing human health and progress.

Sincerely,

Global Colon Cancer Association
Action CF
ADAP Advocacy Association
Ames Chamber of Commerce
BioBuzz Workforce Foundation
BioNJ
Brain Injury Alliance of Connecticut
Center for Healthcare Innovation
Center for Healthcare Strategies
Coalition of Texans with Disabilities
Colorado Bioscience Association
Colorado Competitive Council
Community Access National Network
Delaware HIV Consortium
Denver Metro Chamber of Commerce
Diabetes Hands Foundation
Economic Development Coalition of Southwest Indiana
Elder Care Advocacy of Florida
Epilepsy Association of the Big Bend
Florida State Hispanic Chamber of Commerce
Global Alliance for Patient Access
Global Pneumonia Prevention Coalition
H.E.A.L.S of the South
HealthCare Institute of New Jersey (HINJ)
ICAN, International Cancer Advocacy Network
Illinois Biotechnology Industry Organization
Illinois Manufacturers' Association
Indiana Health Industry Forum

Kendall Square Association
Life Science Washington
Lupus Foundation of Florida
Massachusetts Biomedical Initiatives
MassBio
MedCara Pharmaceuticals
Metro Denver Economic Development Corporation
NAMI Wyoming
National Blood Clot Alliance
National Council for Behavioral Health
National Association of County Behavioral Health & Developmental Disability Directors
New England Bio
NJ Mayors Committee on Life Sciences
Pennsylvania Bio
Rio Grande Valley Diabetes Association
SD Biotech
StopAfib.org
Texas association of Business
Texas Healthcare & Bioscience Institute
Texas Nurse Practitioners
The Michael J. Fox Foundation
Virginia Bio
Virginia Chamber of Commerce
Virginia Hispanic Chamber
Washington Council on International Trade
Wellness and Education Community Action Health Network (WECAHN)
Wyoming Epilepsy Association

CC: The President
The White House

The Honorable Penny Pritzker
Secretary of Commerce

The Honorable Michael Froman
United States Trade Representative