



March 18, 2024

The Honorable Christopher Coons
Chairman
Subcommittee on State, Foreign Operations,
and Related Programs
U.S. Senate Committee on Appropriations
S-128, The Capitol
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Lindsey Graham
Ranking Member
Subcommittee on State, Foreign Operations,
and Related Programs
U.S. Senate Committee on Appropriations
S-128, The Capitol
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Mario Diaz-Balart
Chairman
Subcommittee on State, Foreign Operations,
and Related Programs
U.S. House Committee on Appropriations
H-307, The Capitol
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Barbara Lee
Ranking Member
Subcommittee on State, Foreign Operations,
and Related Programs
U.S. House Committee on Appropriations
H-307, The Capitol
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairman Coons, Chairman Diaz-Balart, Ranking Member Graham, and Ranking Member Lee:

We are writing today in support of Mass General Brigham's \$15 million FY2025 funding request in the State, Foreign Operations Appropriations bill to address severe childhood-onset chronic noncommunicable diseases (NCDs) in Africa through expansion of the proven PEN-Plus model.

Severe NCDs cause more than 500,000 avoidable deaths every year among the world's poorest children, adolescents, and youth. Nearly 100,000 of these deaths are caused by just four conditions—type 1 diabetes, sickle cell disease, and rheumatic and congenital heart disease, which results in a tremendous loss of health, as well as an economic burden on the neediest populations. The PEN-Plus strategy, developed by Mass General Brigham's Center for Integration Science in Global Health Equity, supports low- and middle-income countries to sustainably integrate care for these complex chronic diseases into their health systems.

PEN-Plus is supported both technically and financially through the PEN-Plus Partnership, coordinated through Mass General Brigham's Center for Integration Science. Partnership members include the American Heart Association, the American Society of Hematology, JDRF International, Partners In Health, UNICEF, the Africa Centres for Disease Control, the World Health Organization Regional Office for Africa, and many other groups, all of whom are committed to reducing the death and suffering of the poorest people who live with severe NCDs. To date, Mass General Brigham and its partners have supported PEN-Plus interventions in 14 lower-income countries, which are now able to provide lifesaving training, diagnosis and treatment for children and young adults living with severe NCDs within their local health systems. Yet financial limitations are hampering the expansion of these programs to more facilities and countries, particularly in sub-Saharan Africa, where most low-income countries are concentrated.

On behalf of the PEN-Plus Partnership, Mass General Brigham is seeking \$15 million in FY2025 to expand PEN-Plus programs across sub-Saharan Africa. Our organizations, both directly and indirectly, actively support and fund PEN-Plus interventions, as we believe it is the most effective and sustainable route to ensure access to care for persons living with these diseases, no matter where they live. We write in strong support of this request for the US Government to leverage our support and play a leadership role in this space.

Thank you, in advance, for your consideration of this request.

Sincerely,



Gene Bukhman, MD, PhD
Executive Director
Mass General Brigham
Center for Integration Science
in Global Health Equity



Mark Schoeberl
Executive Vice President, Advocacy
American Heart Association

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Cate Oswald
Chief Policy and Partnership Officer
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Lynn Starr
Chief Global Advocacy Officer
JDRF