



April 25, 2024

Dear Colleagues:

Today marks World Malaria Day, a day set aside to highlight the need for continued investment and sustained commitment to eliminate malaria. Malaria is a life-threatening disease spread to humans by *Anopheles* mosquitoes. It continues to be a cause of preventable illness and death in the world, resulting in nearly 249 million cases and 608,000 deaths across 85 countries in 2022. Africa bears the largest burden of malaria cases and deaths, with children and pregnant women being disproportionately affected. Children under five make up approximately 80% of malaria deaths in Africa, and malaria in pregnancy can lead to severe health consequences, including maternal and neonatal deaths.

Malaria also poses a threat domestically. There are nearly 2,000 cases of malaria reported each year, mostly due to international travel. However, last year, for the first time in 20 years, the United States experienced cases of locally acquired mosquito-transmitted malaria. Experts in the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's (CDC) Division of Parasitic Diseases and Malaria sprang into action, supporting early detection and a prompt response. With our state and local partners in the lead, CDC acted as a technical co-pilot, strengthening public health capacity. Public health teams working together was essential in limiting further local spread beyond the 10 cases across four states (Florida, Texas, Maryland, and Arkansas), serving as an important reminder that a global problem can quickly become a local one.

CDC's priority is to protect health and improve lives, and since 1946, CDC has been a global leader in malaria prevention and control. We have led the development of many of the gold-standard malaria vector surveillance and control methods that are used around the world today. CDC co-implements the President's Malaria Initiative, which is led by the United States Agency for International Development. CDC also provides technical recommendations to the U.S. Global Malaria Coordinator, as well as in-country expertise, driving progress toward malaria elimination. These efforts have contributed to preventing at least 2.1 billion malaria cases and 11.7 million malaria deaths since 2000, but threats remain.

Threats, including drug and insecticide resistance, invasive mosquito species, severe weather events, and limitations with rapid diagnostic tests, pose ongoing challenges to eliminating malaria. This year's World Malaria Day theme, "Accelerating the Fight Against Malaria for a More Equitable World," highlights the importance of action in

addressing malaria. Thus, CDC and our global partners must work together to develop new interventions and support public health innovations to quickly address these threats. Recently, CDC developed a new rapid, cost-effective test for detecting an invasive malaria vector, *Anopheles stephensi*. This mosquito, unlike other malaria vectors, is resistant to many key insecticides, thrives in urban areas, and is starting to spread across parts of Africa. This novel tool can be used in resource-limited settings, allowing us to detect this emerging threat early, closely monitor its spread, and support rapid response. Developing such innovative tools supports global efforts to combat malaria and demonstrates CDC's expertise and unwavering commitment to staying ahead of emerging threats.

As we reflect on these accomplishments and the progress made, let us recommit ourselves to the goal of eliminating malaria and working together to overcome these challenges and end this preventable disease. Together, we can make a tangible difference in protecting the health and improving the lives of millions affected by malaria and contribute to a healthier, more resilient world.

Thank you for your ongoing dedication and partnership in this vital work.



Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Mandy K. Cohen". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Mandy K. Cohen, MD, MPH  
Director, CDC, and  
Administrator, Agency for Toxic Substances and  
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