

Bill Gates to give \$500 million for malaria, other diseases

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US philanthropist Bill Gates on Sunday announced he will donate over \$500 million to fight malaria and other infectious diseases in the developing world, saying the Ebola outbreak is a call to action.

The former Microsoft CEO told the 63rd annual meeting of the American Society of Tropical Medicine and Hygiene in New Orleans that his Gates Foundation is committing more than \$500 million in 2014 "to reduce the burden of [malaria](#), pneumonia, diarrheal diseases, and an array of parasitic infections that are leading causes of death and disability in developing countries," a statement said.

Gates also said that in addition to that pledge, his foundation has boosted its annual funding for malaria by 30 percent.

Gates described the Ebola epidemic that has killed more than 4,900 people in West Africa since the beginning of the year as a "critical moment in the history of global health," and said the world's largest outbreak of the hemorrhagic fever underscores the need for stronger efforts to stay ahead of disease threats such as drug-resistant malaria and dengue fever.

"The Ebola epidemic has shown, once again, that in today's interconnected world, health challenges anywhere create health challenges everywhere—and the best way to overcome those challenges is to dedicate ourselves to the great cause of reducing the global burden of infectious disease," Gates said in his prepared remarks.

The Gates Foundation announced in September a \$50-million commitment to help scale up efforts to contain the Ebola outbreak.

The more than \$500 million announced Sunday includes over \$150 million to the PATH Malaria Vaccine Initiative to advance development of next-generation malaria vaccines, and \$29 million to the Clinton Health Access Initiative to support malaria elimination efforts in Southern Africa and the Greater Mekong Sub-region of Southeast Asia.

Gates said the rise in resistance to effective malaria drugs in Southeast Asia should serve as a warning, that better research and development is needed to "stay ahead of the natural evolution of [infectious diseases](#)."

Other grants announced by Gates include \$49 million to PATH Vaccine Solutions to develop new vaccines and combinations of vaccines against bacterial causes of diarrhea, and \$18 million to the University of Maryland for studies in Mali, Kenya and Gambia on the impact of rotavirus vaccines on child health.

Other grants aim to help eradicate neglected infectious diseases, including \$60 million toward finding treatments for a disfiguring disease sometimes known as elephantiasis (lymphatic filariasis) as well as sleeping sickness (human African trypanosomiasis), and black fever (visceral leishmaniasis).

Gates said that eradicating malaria by the middle of this century is "both a necessary objective and an attainable one."

What is needed are single-dose complete cures for malaria, more sophisticated diagnostics and a next-generation malaria vaccine, as well as more widespread and precise use of bednets, he said.

"We must remain committed to the eradication of malaria," Gates said.

"Small steps won't get the job done. History shows that the only way to stop malaria is to end it forever."

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