September 12, 2016

Dear Speaker Ryan, Minority Leader Pelosi, Majority Leader McConnell, and Minority Leader Reid:

The American Academy of Neurology (AAN), is an association of more than 30,000 neurologists and neuroscience professionals dedicated to providing the best possible care for patients with neurological conditions. We are greatly concerned about the spread of the Zika virus.

The number of Americans contracting Zika is alarming and its impact on pregnant women in the US is a public health emergency. Last week, Centers for Diseases Control and Prevention Director Thomas Frieden said that “we are now essentially out of money” and that the country is “about to see a bunch of kids born with microcephaly.”

Microcephaly is a tragic neurological disease that greatly impacts infants and their families, but it is not the only concern. The Zika virus also impacts adults who may suffer from the painful and debilitating Guillain Barré syndrome.

As neurologists, we understand the devastating impact of these conditions and potentially many more caused by Zika. We cannot allow these preventable conditions to occur. We strongly urge Congress to pass bipartisan legislation as soon as possible to provide federal agencies, states, and localities with the funds necessary to combat the virus.

The American Academy of Neurology stands ready to assist you in combating the spread of the Zika virus and to care for those who are infected.

Sincerely,

Terrence L. Cascino, MD, FAAN
President, American Academy of Neurology