



March 9, 2015

Dear Members of Congress:

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Research!America, the United States' largest not-for-profit advocacy and public education alliance working to elevate medical progress to a higher national priority, appreciates the challenge Congress faces as it allocates scarce discretionary dollars across numerous federal agencies and programs.

As you determine your priorities for fiscal year 2016 funding, we hope you will consider including the following requests:

NIH: Finding Cures, Making Health Care Affordable

The National Institutes of Health (NIH) is our country's primary medical research agency, supporting breakthroughs in how we understand and treat the human body. Research on diseases like cancer and Alzheimer's will improve the quality of life for all Americans. However, years of virtually flat funding have reduced NIH's inflation-adjusted budget by over 22 percent, making it difficult for top-ranked research to move forward. This funding drought puts further distance between citizens suffering from debilitating conditions and the cures they desperately need.

As it stands, the National Institutes of Health can only fund 18 percent of the research proposals it receives each year, not because that is the proportion of responsible, meritorious, and potentially game-changing proposals researchers across the country are equipped to pursue, but because NIH lacks the resources to do more. We ask that you champion a 10 percent or an approximately \$3 billion increase in funding for the National Institutes of Health in fiscal year 2016. Research!America recognizes the enormity of the challenge we are posing for Congress in making that request, and that realistically, the BCA budget caps will need to be modified to accommodate it. In FY16, take a first step toward preserving American preeminence in health research by supporting a bold increase for NIH funding to at least \$33 billion.

CDC: Holding Strong our First Line of Biological Defense

In a dangerous and ever-evolving world, research to better understand and prevent costly pandemics, deadly bioterrorism and debilitating diseases is critical. One of the many ways the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) protects American citizens is by funding research aimed at taming the myriad biothreats knocking on our door. Last year's international Ebola epidemic showcased the CDC's important work as it prevented an American outbreak and helped tame the disease in Africa. Please safeguard our nation's well-being by increasing the CDC's funding in FY16 to \$7.8 billion.

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FDA: Ensuring Safe and Effective Medicine

One quarter of all consumer spending in the United States is overseen by the Food and Drug Administration (FDA), which ensures the integrity of prescription and over-the-counter pharmaceutical medications, vaccines, biopharmaceuticals, medical devices and more. The relationship between innovation and regulation can be an uneasy one, but if a medical advance is not safe or effective, it is not a true advance. To provide patients with safe treatments and ensure the delivery of the promises of an innovative health care system, we must adequately fund the FDA. We ask that you fund the FDA at \$2.75 billion in FY16.

NSF: Supporting Basic Research and the Next Generation of Innovators

The National Science Foundation (NSF) supports America's basic research in science and engineering. This research is critical to the innovation process and lays the foundation for novel discoveries across many disciplines. NSF funds led to the creation of Google, helped decode the genetics of viruses, and helped enable the careers of 46 Nobel Prize winners in medicine alone. NSF also trains the next generation of leaders by dedicating grants to science and engineering education from pre-K through graduate school and beyond. Please ensure that robust support for the NSF is a facet of your appropriations request at \$7.7 billion in FY16.

AHRQ: Keeping Health Care Costs under Control

For compelling reasons, our nation has also sustained a commitment to financing noncommercial behavioral and social science research. The Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality (AHRQ) is the leading financer of health services research (HSR). HSR, health economics research, behavioral research and other social sciences research disciplines are so important because Americans want to exert maximum control over their own health and wellness, the value of biomedical innovation is intertwined with how health care is delivered, and without these research disciplines, the goal of truly "patient-centered" health care could not be realized. Biomedical research does not uncover patient risk/benefit preferences, strategies for maximizing the dissemination of medical advances, minimizing medical error, and fostering wellness. That's the job of social sciences research. By better understanding the system, we can make it more effective and efficient, delivering better patient outcomes at lower costs. Ensure a better, easier health care system for future generations by providing robust funding for AHRQ in FY16.

Research!America appreciates the difficult task facing Congress as it seeks to simultaneously confront the budget deficit, strengthen the United States and promote the wellbeing of Americans. We firmly believe that robust funding for NIH, CDC, FDA, NSF and AHRQ is a means of advancing all three of these fundamental goals. Thank you for your continued support of federally funded medical research.

Sincerely,



Mary Woolley
President and CEO