

Testimony of Research!America to the House Committee on Appropriations Subcommittee on Labor, Health and Human Services, Education, and Related Agencies Concerning Fiscal Year 2022 Appropriations for NIH, CDC, and AHRQ

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Contact: Ellie Dehoney, Vice President of Policy and Advocacy, Research!America,
edehoney@researchamerica.org

On behalf of the Research!America alliance, thank you for this opportunity to submit testimony to the House Appropriations Subcommittee on Labor, Health and Human Services, Education, and Related Agencies on Fiscal Year 2022 (FY22) appropriations. We are grateful that for FY21, the base budgets of the National Institutes of Health (NIH) and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) were increased and the base budget of the Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality (AHRQ) was maintained, and that the Subcommittee additionally provided dedicated funding for critical research programs. The need for faster medical and public health progress has never been more apparent. Our nation has an opportunity, and on behalf of every American, the obligation, to fight health threats faster, learn from this pandemic to bolster public health capacity and preparedness, and leverage evidence as never before to optimize health care delivery. In that context, we ask that you provide an increase in the base budget (exclusive of new initiatives) for NIH of at least \$4.29 billion, for a total of \$47.22 billion; an increase of at least \$2.18 billion for CDC, for a total of \$10 billion; and an increase of at least \$162 million for AHRQ, for a total of \$500 million, in FY22.

The National Institutes of Health

We believe it is in the strategic interests of the U.S. to increase funding for NIH to at least \$47.22 billion in FY22, an increase of 10% over FY21 funding. Our nation and the global community have witnessed the broadscale impact of a global pandemic, but the reality is that every

American either experiences directly or is the loved one of an individual who dies prematurely of a health threat that we can overcome. NIH-conducted and funded research uncovers new knowledge that is the prerequisite to conquering these threats. No entity, in the U.S. or across the globe, has done more to propel academic and private sector progress that saves lives.

NIH funds almost 50,000 competitive grants that are awarded to researchers at over 500 universities, medical schools, and educational institutions in every state. NIH also plays an integral role in educating and training America's future scientists and medical innovators by sponsoring fellowships and training grants.

We believe our nation should seize the opportunity to change the course of history such that we can out-innovate emerging threats and all live longer, healthier lives. Please allocate at least \$47.22 billion in FY22 for the base budget of NIH, an increase of 10% over FY21 funding

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention

We urge you to fund the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) at a level of \$10 billion in FY22, a 27% increase over FY21 enacted. As demonstrated by the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic, public health threats do not respect international borders, and in our increasingly globalized world, we are more vulnerable than ever to emerging, deadly infectious diseases.

CDC is tasked with protecting and advancing the nation's health, and over the past 70 years it has worked diligently to thwart deadly outbreaks and debilitating disease. Moreover, CDC plays a key role in research that leads to life-saving vaccines, bolsters our nation's defense against and response to bioterrorism, and improves health tracking and data analytics.

CDC has been an integral part of the effort to mitigate and defeat COVID-19. Their 24/7 response and the guidance that has emerged from their efforts has empowered our nation to weather this pandemic, but their role as the key first responder when major threats emerge is just part of their contribution to Americans' health, safety, and wellbeing.

CDC is at the forefront of prevention; is working hard and effectively to forestall antibiotic resistance; is the lead federal agency responsible for tracking and forestalling foodborne illness and other local and regional outbreaks; investigates cancer clusters; and protects, investigates, and advances the health of every one of us in myriad ways. Our nation has underfunded CDC at risk to every American: we need to empower this agency to advance the best interests of every American by protecting and advancing the health of all Americans.

The ongoing COVID-19 pandemic, in addition to past outbreaks of Ebola, Zika, influenza, and measles, have shown just how critical CDC is to the health of our nation and have also revealed the enormity of the challenge the agency faces as it works to safeguard American lives. To protect us, CDC scientists must be on the ground fighting public health threats wherever and whenever they occur. We cannot allow a gap between the funding provided to CDC and the demands and challenges placed before the agency. We request that CDC receive at least \$10 billion in FY22, \$2.18 billion over FY21 funding, to ensure the agency can carry out its crucially important responsibilities.

Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality

We urge you to fund AHRQ at a level of \$500 million, a 47.9% increase over FY21 funding, in FY22. AHRQ has been grossly underfunded for decades relative to its mission and the lives and dollars this agency could save if appropriately equipped. AHRQ is the lead federal agency tasked

with making sure our nation is not simply making medical progress, but that this progress translates into more effective, efficient, and affordable health care for Americans across the country. As it stands, our nation overspends by an estimated \$1 trillion each year and abides deadly medical errors that cost at least 100,000 lives each year because we don't deploy strategies to address inefficiencies and errors in health care. Now is the time to empower AHRQ to address this massive, counterproductive challenge.

AHRQ-funded research identifies and highlights how to stop waste of limited health care dollars, empowering patients to receive the right care at the right time in the right settings. For example, AHRQ-funded research informed the creation of an Antibiotic Stewardship Program (ASP) in 402 hospitals across the U.S. to address the overprescription of antibiotics, which can ultimately lead to them being ineffective. This research program successfully reduced the length of time patients needed to be on antibiotic therapy by an average of 30 days. The research also identified key improvements for future ASPs.

The value of medical discovery and development hinge on smart health care delivery. If we underinvest in AHRQ, we are inviting unnecessary health care spending and wasting the opportunity to ensure patients receive the quality care they need.

We appreciate your consideration of our funding requests and thank you, and your respective staff members, for your stewardship over these critically important federal spending priorities.

Sincerely,

Eleanor Dehoney
Vice President of Policy and Advocacy
Research!America