On behalf of Johnson & Johnson’s 135,000 global employees, I am pleased to provide written testimony to the House Appropriations Subcommittee on Labor, Health and Human Services, Education and Related Agencies in support of increased funding for the National Institutes of Health (NIH) Fiscal Year (FY) 2019 budget.

Robust funding for NIH is necessary to ensure the agency’s ability to fuel innovation in medical research that advances healthcare here in the United States and around the world, as well as to fortify America’s position at the forefront of research. This funding request also represents what is required to remain competitive in addressing emerging health threats confronting the United States and to continue to encourage the pursuit of innovative solutions to address these challenges.

As a physician and scientist, I have dedicated much of my life to translating basic scientific research into medical advances. In my current role as Global Head of Johnson & Johnson Global External Innovation and as a board member of Research! America, the nation’s
largest not-for-profit public education and advocacy alliance, I am acutely aware of the value of our country’s investment in research.

In the United States, the vast majority of research into the root causes of disease is publicly funded by the NIH through research grants to more than 2,500 institutions across the country. This research underpins the life sciences economy and enables healthcare companies to transform scientific discoveries of today into the breakthrough healthcare products of tomorrow. Furthermore, the research funded by the NIH often enables the business case for the enormous, at-risk investment of money and effort it takes to discover and develop an important new medical treatment.

At Johnson & Johnson, our vision is to positively impact human health through innovation. In 2017, $10.6 billion was invested in research and development across our pharmaceutical, consumer and medical devices companies. Our teams of scientists work tirelessly to accelerate the translation of scientific discoveries into meaningful treatments for patients in need. Much of our work, and that of scientists across the industry, would not be possible without the constant progression of the understanding of underlying disease biology – precisely the type of research funded by the NIH.

In addition, Johnson & Johnson recognizes the crucial importance of early-stage companies and the critical role NIH plays in supporting these small businesses through Small Business Innovation Research (SBIR) and Small Business Technology Transfer (STTR) funding. At the Johnson & Johnson Innovation incubator sites, JLABS, we help entrepreneurs and
scientists realize their dreams of creating healthcare solutions that improve lives by identifying and nurturing highly innovative ideas in areas of potentially disruptive, cutting-edge research, which may lead to novel platforms, products or technologies. These are advances that the scientific community could only imagine several years ago, yet they are becoming a reality today through the support of public-private partnerships like these.

The work of the NIH is tied not only to innovation and the vitality of the life sciences, but also to the health of our national economy. NIH is the lifeblood of basic research for America, and is also an incredible economic engine. In FY 2017, NIH research funding directly and indirectly supported over 400,000 jobs and spurred nearly $69 billion in new economic activity. Moreover, the pace of medical research must keep up with the aging of our population. There is an urgent need, both on the individual and socioeconomic level, for strategies to prevent illnesses associated with aging or lifestyle. Diseases such as Alzheimer’s, ALS, diabetes, cancer and heart disease threaten to overwhelm our healthcare system in a matter of years with enormous costs of care if we don’t find ways to prevent, treat or cure them.

Investments in biomedical research at the end of the 20th century by the federal government, and pharmaceutical, medical device and biotechnology companies, combined with the work of industry and NIH-funded investigators across the country, have produced fundamental scientific advances, vast new datasets, and increasingly sophisticated areas of scientific research. As the NIH is working on projects in areas like precision medicine, gene
therapy and vaccines to prevent infectious diseases like the influenza and HIV, there has never been a more critical and promising time to work in medical research.

Johnson & Johnson believes that a commitment to fully funding the NIH represents a commitment to fueling innovation in medical research. It is also a commitment to our families by advancing science to match medical need, to our current and future generations of scientists by stimulating the life sciences community and to the prosperity of our nation as a worldwide leader in medical research. Sustainable, robust investment is needed to strengthen this research and to realize its benefits for improving people’s lives and reducing the burden and associated costs of today’s major diseases all around the world.

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