



December 2, 2019

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The Honorable Richard Shelby
Chairman
Committee on Appropriations
U.S. Senate
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Nita Lowey
Chairwoman
Committee on Appropriations
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Patrick Leahy
Vice Chair
Committee on Appropriations
U.S. Senate
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Kay Granger
Ranking Member
Committee on Appropriations
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairman Shelby, Vice Chairman Leahy, Chairwoman Lowey, and Ranking Member Granger,

On behalf of Research!America, the nation's largest nonprofit alliance advocating for science, discovery and innovation to achieve better health for all, thank you for your determined efforts to complete the Fiscal Year 2020 appropriations process. We urge you to clear the final, crucial hurdle by securing bipartisan passage of FY20 appropriations before December 20, 2019 and that you remain stalwart in strengthening our nation's research and public health agencies.

In that context, we greatly appreciate the bipartisan, bicameral support demonstrated for robustly growing the National Institutes of Health (NIH) budget. Preliminary findings from Research!America's "2019 Medical and Health R&D Investment Report" underscore the critical role NIH plays, not only as the catalyst to expanded knowledge that serves the public good in myriad ways, but as a globally-unmatched springboard for the targeted or "applied" research needed to translate basic science into new medical advances.

NIH is the largest U.S. funder of basic research, and the private sector is the largest U.S. funder of applied research, although both provide at least some funding across the full spectrum of discovery and development. Estimates of U.S.-based investment focused specifically on medical and health research & development indicate that for every \$1 in NIH investment, there is \$3.66 in private sector investment. The benefit inherent in that multiplier for patients (and we are all patients) and for the U.S. economy is multi-faceted. Yet as it stands, NIH can fund less than a quarter of the peer-reviewed research proposals scientists in every state across our nation submit to the Institutes each year. As you consider final FY20 funding numbers for NIH, we ask that you continue to invest boldly in this high-return national asset.

We also urge you to champion an urgently needed, significant funding increase for the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). It is not only critically important to equip the agency to confront such formidable health threats as the opioid crisis and antimicrobial resistance, but to substantially increase the funding CDC can deploy to sustain and bolster its core capacities like surveillance.

It is a dangerous mistake to take CDC's bedrock capabilities for granted when the agency's expertise, technology and leadership are called upon to quickly respond to emerging threats. As we have seen again and again, when a health threat arises that imperils Americans, CDC is the first responder. At the same time, we cannot afford to invest only in combating immediate health threats; we cannot allow the infrastructure supporting CDC's ability to defend against future threats to erode.

Research!America is deeply concerned that the Senate's FY20 "Labor-H" bill proposes cutting funding for the Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality (AHRQ). AHRQ is already grossly underfunded, limiting our nation's ability to identify and eliminate unnecessary health care spending and time-lags between medical progress and main street benefit. Further, more than 25% of AHRQ's current budget comes from the at-risk "PCOR" trust fund. The lack of basic budget authority for AHRQ's core mission and extraordinary level of uncertainty under which the agency operates run counter to fiscal stewardship and the best interests of the American people.

Out of the \$3.6 trillion in annual U.S. health care spending, an estimated 30% could be prevented by addressing errors and inefficiencies. AHRQ-funded research identifies and addresses this diversion of limited health care dollars in demonstrable ways, such as achieving dramatic reductions in healthcare-acquired infections and other medical errors, disseminating best practices to address quality-compromising, cost-ineffective variation in health care delivery, cutting emergency room wait times from hours to minutes, and reducing debilitating and costly patient falls. We ask that you bolster the AHRQ budget to empower smart and timely health care.

Considerations both practical and strategic also amply justify boosted funding for the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) and the National Science Foundation (NSF).

FDA oversees more than \$2.4 trillion in products, which account for 20 percent of annual spending by U.S. consumers. In 2018, FDA once again demonstrated a rock-solid commitment to evaluating the safety and effectiveness of medical products in as efficient a manner as possible, approving more than 30 novel treatments for deadly and debilitating rare diseases. Increased funding for FDA is needed to ensure the agency can keep pace with modern science, accurately assessing rapidly evolving treatments and technologies and capitalizing on patient input and real world data to incorporate the many factors influencing individual and population health. FDA cannot continue to meet its vast mission with insufficient resources: we strongly urge robust funding for the agency in FY20.

NSF funds diverse basic and applied research in local universities and other research institutions located in all 50 states, the District of Columbia and three U.S. territories. Approximately 90% of NSF funding is allocated to grants or cooperative agreements to researchers through a competitive merit review process. Since 1950, NSF has supported more than 236 Nobel Prize winners, including five Nobel Laureates in 2018. The studies supported by NSF bear on virtually every sector of our economy, support cyber- and other crucial areas of national security, and factor importantly into the productive use of big data and other highly promising avenues of research. We urge you to significantly grow the nation's investment in NSF as a means of bolstering U.S. economic output, security, and health, and assuring these imperatives are advanced in the future by preparing the next generation of scientists.

Thank you again, and thanks to your respective staff members, for your commitment and hard work on behalf of your constituents and the nation as a whole. We appreciate you considering our views.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Mary Woolley". The signature is written in a dark ink and is positioned below the word "Sincerely,".

Mary Woolley
President and CEO, Research!America