The 2018 midterm elections could have tremendous impact on funding for medical, health and scientific research at a time when these issues demand attention. To explore the outcomes of the elections, including key House and Senate races, Research!America will host a post-election briefing on November 8, 2018.

The briefing, which will be held at the American Association for the Advancement of Science, will feature guest speaker Reid Wilson, national correspondent for The Hill newspaper. Wilson covered politics for The Washington Post, and he’s the former editor-in-chief of National Journal’s The Hotline. He is also the Amazon best-selling author of the book, Epidemic: Ebola and the Global Scramble to Prevent the Next Killer Outbreak. Mr. Wilson is an expert in spotting political trends as they develop and will take the opportunity to break down the election results and share his insight into future trends.

Research!America President and CEO Mary Woolley will also present highlights of the alliance’s Bipartisan Civic Engagement Initiative, which supported graduate and postdoc-led student science policy groups as they worked to engage with political candidates around the importance of scientific research. Woolley will present highlights from this effort over the last several months. Then, Rachel Owen, co-founder of the Missouri Science and Technology Fellows Program, will share her group’s experience.

The heart of the event will be a panel discussion analyzing the outcomes of the election, moderated by Yamiche Alcindor, White House Correspondent for PBS NewsHour. Alcindor is also a correspondent for NBC News and MSNBC. She will moderate a panel discussion of several former members of Congress and committee staff, including The Honorable John Edward Porter, The Honorable Michael N. Castle, The Honorable Bart Gordon and Sudip Parikh, PhD. The panel will explore implications of the election for medical and health research and development. For more information or to register, visit Research!America’s website at https://www.researchamerica.org/2018-post-election-briefing.

Research!America to Host Post-Election Briefing

Engaging Women Leaders in Research and Development

Research!America member Horizon Pharma recently became an inaugural partner and first biopharmaceutical company to sign on to Together We Lead, an initiative of the Washington Area Women’s Foundation (WAWF) designed to create a space for women at various levels of partner companies to come together with their peers to understand the most effective strategies for advancing women leaders. There has been wide recognition throughout the biopharmaceutical industry that C-level positions are overwhelmingly held by men, yet companies benefit from diverse voices in leadership roles. In response to this, the Biotechnology Innovation Organization has set a goal for their members to increase representation of women in C-suite level positions to 50% by 2025. By partnering with WAWF on Together We lead, Horizon is taking an active role in engaging upcoming women leaders in R&D. “At Horizon Pharma, we are committed to making greater strides in diversity and inclusion as we know that when you assemble people with distinct differences – differences in technical capabilities, professional backgrounds, personal experiences and with differing levels of expertise – this translates to strong R&D teams, clinical trials, and strong companies that are nimble and creative in their problem solving,” said Synim Rivers of Horizon Pharma.

Large Majority Say Candidates Should Assign High Priority to Research Funding

How important is it for candidates running for Congress to assign a high priority to increasing funding for medical research?

- 45% Very Important
- 32% Somewhat Important
- 10% Not Too Important
- 8% Not Sure
- 5% Not At All Important

Source: A Research!America Survey of U.S. Adults Conducted in Partnership with J.D. Power Analytics in January 2018. Due to rounding, the totals may not add to 100%.

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Be sure to vote. It’s a critical obligation of citizenship as well as an opportunity for advocacy. Your vote is your expression of priorities and that is advocacy! Regardless of the outcome of the election, stakeholders in research will have our work cut out for us in weeks and months ahead.

First up for the Congress is the necessary business of completing several appropriations bills, including those that fund the FDA and NSF. There is bipartisan support for these but never a guarantee that Congress will act; that’s why your advocacy matters. Advocacy also matters in the drive to make the medical device tax permanent before the current Congress wraps up. (Find out more elsewhere in this issue.) And, advocacy matters in assuring that the Senate acts to confirm Dr. Kelvin Droegemeier, an atmospheric scientist, as Director of the Office of Science Technology Policy.

In the new Congress, we must all advocate to eliminate sequestration — if we don’t, we could be looking at as much as a 25% cut to health research agencies. That’s right, one quarter of the budget could be wiped out. Think of the message that sends to patients (sorry, medical progress is on hold) and to young scientists (head for a different career). If you haven’t already signed on to receive my weekly electronic letter and our timely advocacy alerts, please do so now. Just visit our website at http://bit.ly/2OjBiHZ. And mark your calendars for Public Health Thank You Day on November 19.

A final word — when your new or re-elected representatives are known, write them each a letter. Thank them for serving the public’s interest and urge them to be champions for medical progress by fully supporting the policies and finding that drive research for health.
Over 200 Organizations Sign On to Letter Thanking Congress for Funding Increase

Over 200 organizations signed on to a letter organized by Research!America thanking the leadership of the House and Senate Appropriations Subcommittees on Labor, Health and Human Services, Education and Related Agencies for their efforts in ensuring meaningful funding increases for medical and public health research for FY19.

“Our organizations want to be sure that you and your staff members know how much we appreciate what you accomplished in passing this legislation before the start of the new fiscal year and including funding that will power more progress against deadly and debilitating health threats,” the letter said.

The letter can be found on the Research!America website: http://bit.ly/2Qg00s5.

Federal Policy Update

On October 24, the President signed a sweeping, bipartisan legislative package aimed at combating the opioid epidemic. Among the many provisions in the package are strategies to stop the flow of opioids into the nation, promote safer treatment and prescribing policies, and bolster research into non-addictive pain treatment and neonatal abstinence syndrome. One research component of the bill, specifically the focus on non-addictive pain treatments, is also a key tenet of NIH’s Helping to End Addiction Long-term (HEAL) initiative.

As noted last month, the FY19 Labor-HHS/Defense minibus package included a continuing resolution (CR) to fund, among several agencies, FDA and NSF through December 7. Although it is not clear exactly how long these agencies can expect flat funding, Congress reportedly remains committed to finalizing all appropriations bills before the end of the year. For a summary on the status of FY19 appropriations for NIH, CDC, FDA, NSF and AHRQ, see the chart on page 4.

There is still a chance that Congress will pass legislation to repeal the medical device excise tax this year, potentially as part of a package to complete the FY19 appropriations process. The medical device tax is under its second consecutive suspension, which is set to expire in 2019.

Public health officials have been working to contain an Ebola outbreak, officially declared on August 1, which has been impacting the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC). Though officials were able to contain a previous outbreak in the DRC, the current outbreak has proven more challenging. To date, more than 200 individuals have been infected and 120 lives have been lost. Concerns are rising that this outbreak may spread into the neighboring nations of Uganda and Rwanda. Meanwhile, the U.S. is dealing with an outbreak of acute flaccid myelitis (AFM), a polio-like syndrome that causes muscle weakness and paralysis. To date, public health officials are assessing 155 possible reports of the disease, which affects children, and have confirmed cases in 22 states.

The Trump Administration is continuing to focus on policy changes focused on prescription drug pricing. Department of Health and Human Services Secretary Alex Azar announced new regulations on this topic, which would require the posting of list prices in direct-to-consumer advertising of drugs and biologics. The public comment period for the proposal will run until December 17, and can be accessed here: http://bit.ly/2CT9uly. The president announced other initiatives, including a “reference pricing” model that would base Medicare reimbursement for certain physician-administered medications on prices paid in other developed nations. It is unclear whether these proposals will advance.

Don’t Forget!
The deadline to nominate studies for the Annual Top 10 Clinical Research Achievement Awards is Monday, November 12!
For more information, visit http://bit.ly/2lv8p1U
The Role of Women in Advocacy for Science

Encouraging women to be stronger science advocates was the focus of Research!America’s President and CEO Mary Woolley’s remarks to the Rosalind Franklin Society board meeting on November 1.

Woolley noted that women’s contributions to science and participation in research has been historically overlooked. She recounted an experience early in her career as San Francisco project director for the Multiple Risk Factor Intervention Trial (MRFIT). Women were not included in the MRFIT trial population. “At the time, MRFIT was the largest-ever National Institute of Health-funded clinical trial and it never occurred to the researchers that women should be included in the trial population,” Woolley lamented. The exclusion of women in clinical research evolved from an NIH policy into law 25 years ago. Woolley underscored that representation of women in Congress, in scientific leadership positions and in board rooms across the country is woefully low.

While slow, progress is being made to reduce gender disparities in science. Woolley pointed to the first female president of the U.S. National Academy of Sciences, recent American Association for the Advancement of Science presidents and female advocacy leaders in the public and private sector. Woolley urged the board to continue to advocate strongly for medical and health research to maintain U.S. global leadership in research and innovation. “We must continue to connect the dots between investments in research and growing a strong economy and boosting the health of Americans.”

Briefing Addresses Role of Oral Health in Systemic Health

Oral health truly is systemic health, as the panelists at a Capitol Hill Briefing hosted by Research!America agreed. At the October 10 briefing, moderated by Beth Truett of Oral Health America, participants heard about the ways that research on oral health contributes to systemic health and the importance of educating all health practitioners about the significance of oral health.

Martha Somerman, DDS, PhD, Director of the National Institute of Dental and Craniofacial Research (NIDCR) at the National Institutes of Health, described how her institute was founded in 1948 to address a severe epidemic of caries [cavities]. “Many people think dental research is all about caries,” she said, but “most recently we’ve increased the work in our clinical center which looks at not just periodontal health but understanding rare diseases, cancers, genetic makeup, and new therapies.”

Maria Ryan, DDS, PhD, Vice President and Chief Dental Officer at Colgate and President of the American Association for Dental Research (AADR) described the work of the AADR, whose mission is to advance research and increase knowledge for oral health. She quoted former Surgeon General of the United State C. Everett Koop in saying, “You are not healthy without good oral health.” The challenge, she said, is “convincing both physicians and laypeople that without oral health, you are not healthy.” She added that “bacteria can be couriers of disease, increasing your risk for other diseases like heart disease, stroke, diabetes, and spontaneous preterm births. Chronic tooth infections can kill more than a smile.”

Marko Vujicic, PhD, Chief Economist and Vice President of the American Dental Association Health Policy Institute, pointed out the socioeconomic impacts of oral health, noting that, “We have 30% of low-income adults in the U.S. saying that the condition of their mouth and teeth is so bad that it affects their ability to interview for a job.”

Research, the panel agreed, is making a difference. Dr. Ryan explained: “We know that most of the diseases we treat in the oral cavity are due to risk factors, bacteria, and inflammation. We’ve learned so much more about the bacteria we are addressing, and how people respond to those bacteria. We continue to learn more every day because of the funding coming into the NIDCR.”

<table>
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<tr>
<th>AGENCY</th>
<th>FY18</th>
<th>PRESIDENT’S FY19 REQUEST</th>
<th>RESEARCH!AMERICA’S FY19 ASKS</th>
<th>FY19 HOUSE</th>
<th>FY19 SENATE</th>
<th>FY19 MINIBUS</th>
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<tr>
<td>NIH**</td>
<td>$37.08 billion</td>
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* indicates that program level is reported in this chart
** indicates that budget authority is reported in this chart
Economic Benefits of Research

In a *Baltimore Sun* article about a new research facility at the University of Maryland, Research!America board member E. Albert Reece, MD, Dean, University of Maryland School of Medicine, said the facility will benefit the local community. “This building will house funded research, people bringing federal dollars to the city of Baltimore. That will have a significant economic impact on our city.”

Medical Education

In a *Modern Healthcare* article about the American Medical Association’s (AMA) new medical education grant program Research!America board member James Madara, MD, EVP and CEO, American Medical Association, was quoted about the importance of preparing future physicians for the demands of the current healthcare landscape.

Health Care Technology

Research!America Board Member Harold L. Paz, MD, MS, EVP and CMO, Aetna, was quoted in an *Mobi Health News* article discussing the company’s long term plan to integrate technology into its products and services.

Telemedicine

In an *Boston Magazine* article about local physician wait times Research!America board member Susan Dentzer, president and CEO, Network for Excellence in Health Innovation (NEHI), noted that leveraging technology can improve caregiver engagements with patients.

Open Access Publishing

In a *Physics Today* article about a new European open-access research publishing policy, Research!America board member Rush Holt, PhD, CEO of the American Association for the Advancement of Science was quoted about the impact the policy could have on authors and researchers.

**BioNJ Awards**

Research!America board member William N. Hait, MD, PhD, Global Head, Johnson & Johnson Global External Innovation was featured in a *New Jersey Business* article as the recipient of the 2019 Dr. Sol J. Barer Award for Vision, Innovation and Leadership from BioNJ for this work on behalf of patients and New Jersey’s life sciences ecosystem.

**IN BRIEF**

- NIH Director Francis Collins was interviewed on the Amazing Things podcast, presented by United for Medical Research.  

- The Washington Post is hosting “Chasing Cancer,” a live news event where experts will discuss the latest advances in cancer detection and treatment.  

- The Food and Drug Law Institute is hosting a two-day course on “Patient Organizations: An Introduction to Drug Law and Regulation.”  

- The National Science Foundation released a report highlighting the 236 Nobel laureates that have received grants from the NSF and other federal agencies.  

**Flu Season**

Research!America board member Georges Benjamin, MD, director of the American Public Health Association, was quoted in a *USA Today* article about the FDA’s approval of a medication to treat the flu, noting the importance of having a variety of treatment options for patients.

**Mental Health in the Workplace**

In a *EHS Today* article, Research!America board member Nancy Brown, CEO of the American Heart Association was quoted about the importance of employers creating a supportive and healthy work environment to enhance employee well-being.

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Bipartisan Civic Engagement Update

As the November midterm election nears, Research!America’s Bipartisan Civic Engagement initiative has been in full swing as graduate and post-doc science policy groups host public and candidate engagement events across the nation.

The Catalysts for Science Policy at the University of Wisconsin, Madison held an all-day workshop that introduced scientists and the public to science policy and the importance of effective science communication. The meeting focused on science policy issues of interest to Wisconsinites, such as environmental and research policy. Attendees heard from science policy analyst Chris Pickett and discussed policy issues with Secretary of State candidates Doug LaFollette (D) and Jay Schroeder (R). The event was held October 29 on the University of Wisconsin, Madison campus.

The South Carolina Psychiatric Association (SCPA) and South Carolina Medical Association Student Section (SCmA) at the Medical University of South Carolina (MUSC) hosted State House candidates Jennifer Gibson (D-99), William Cogswell (R-110), Ben Pogue (D-110), and Carol Tempel (D-115) at a Coffee with the Candidates event to discuss how their research directly impacts the economy of South Carolina. Candidates also discussed advances in telemedicine and the research needed to increase our understanding of the opioid epidemic. State House candidates Nancy Mace (R-99, incumbent) and Peter McCoy (R-115, incumbent) were invited, but could not attend due to scheduling constraints.


Public Health Thank You Day November 19

Public health heroes are fighting to keep people healthy every day. On Monday, November 19, 2018, Research!America will partner with leading public health organizations to thank these hard-working professionals. Keeping our communities healthy takes a tremendous effort. It’s important to recognize all of the researchers, health inspectors, nutritionists, occupational health professionals, first responders, and so many more for all of their efforts.

Public health professionals protect us from diseases, ensure everyone has clean water and air, and help recover from natural disasters. They also teach people how to live healthier lives by providing information about topics such as nutritious eating practices and the dangers of smoking. This flu season, public health workers will be there to distribute over 160 million safe and effective vaccines to keep people healthy. Thanks to their efforts, public health conditions in America are improving every day.

Research!America welcomes everyone to join us in thanking these dedicated people. You can learn more about the astounding things being done in the field of public health and get tips on how to thank them on social media with the hashtag #PHTYD at www.publichealththankyouday.org.

November 19 is Public Health Thank You Day

Public Health is Your Health! #PHTYD

Technology and Innovation in the Opioid Epidemic and Treating Diabetes

POLITICO held a conference titled “A Tale of Two Crises” on October 18 to explore how using technology and innovation can help to combat the issues of opioid addiction and diabetes. As noted by moderator Joanne Kennen, executive health care editor at POLITICO, “More than a third of Americans have diabetes or pre-diabetes, and an estimated 115 people die each day as a result of opioid abuse.” In order to find a way to combat these conditions that are gripping the nation, health leaders are harnessing the latest technological advancements to employ prevention programs and to provide healthcare in new and innovative ways.

In the first panel, which centered on the opioid epidemic, Samantha Arsenault, Director of National Treatment Quality Initiatives for Shatterproof, reported that she has been using claims data to create a standardized addiction treatment plan, stating, “we all know what to look for when picking a sunscreen, but we don’t know what to look for with an addiction treatment program.”

The panel also featured Elizabeth Goodman, DrPH, JD, MSW, Executive Vice President of Government Affairs and Innovation for America’s Health Insurance Plans.

Eric Weintraub, MD, Associate Professor, Department of Psychiatry, University of Maryland School of Medicine, spoke on how he is leading an initiative that uses telehealth to extend the reach of addiction specialists and providers to rural areas who may not have access. However, he noted that “what works in Maryland may not work in Alaska,” and called on innovators to help tailor this program to the specific needs of a state.

In the second panel, which focused on diabetes, featured Heather Hodge, MEd, Senior Director, Evidence-based Health Interventions for YMCA of the USA, Dana Lewis, Founder of #OpenAPS, and Joshua Riff, MD, Chief Executive Officer for Onduo. They discussed the importance of using technology and innovation to reduce the burden of living with diabetes. Lewis reported being inspired by the DIY community to design and create her own wearable computer, which allows her to be proactive about tracking her diabetes treatment. She asked all researchers to “do it for the patients.”
With more than 20,000 members representing 131 countries, the American Society of Nephrology (ASN) leads the fight to prevent, treat, and cure kidney diseases throughout the world by educating health professionals and scientists, advancing research and innovation, communicating new knowledge, and advocating for the highest quality care for patients. To accomplish this mission, ASN has forged partnerships with several federal agencies that benefit the more than 850,000,000 people worldwide with kidney diseases (including 40,000,000 in the United States).

To foster the development of therapies for diseases that affect the kidney, ASN is engaged in two unique initiatives. The Kidney Health Initiative (KHI), a public-private partnership between ASN and the US Food and Drug Administration (FDA) established in 2012, has members across the kidney community including patient and health professional organizations, industry partners, and federal agencies. KHI encourages collaboration through a member-driven project submission process, workshops, and an annual meeting in which the FDA and the greater nephrology community interact to optimize evaluation of drugs, devices, biologics, and food products.

ASN also partnered with the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services in April 2018 to establish KidneyX and accelerate breakthroughs to promising new technologies for people with kidney diseases. KidneyX will host a series of prize competitions to provide competitive funding to promising innovators and address the barriers most commonly identified when developing new products to prevent, diagnose, and treat kidney diseases. The first prize competition, KidneyX Prize: Redesign Dialysis, has a total prize pool of $2,625,000.

To enhance the quality of life for the more than 700,000 people in the United States with kidney failure, ASN has partnered with the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) to engage nephrologists as team leaders in transformational change. Nephrologists Transforming Dialysis Safety (NTDS) makes dialysis safer by eliminating preventable infections through adherence to recommended practice, screening and detection, implementation of clinical protocols, and human factors assessments.

Finally, ASN in partnership with the US Department of Veterans Affairs (VA), is developing a powerful tool to empower kidney patients to contribute to their own well-being. A new mobile app designed specifically for people with kidney diseases, the MyKidneyNutrition App, is being developed to track nutritional, fitness and medication information.

“Research!America is proof that meaningful success for patients, researchers, and clinicians can be achieved through collaborative measures. ASN will continue to look for opportunities to engage with the broader community on any kidney-related clinical or scientific issue to spur innovation in nephrology,” says Mark D. Okusa, MD, FASN, ASN President.

To complement the work of federal research funding agencies, including the National Institutes of Health, VA, and the Patient Centered Outcomes Institute, the ASN Foundation for Kidney Research was established in 2012. The Foundation provides more than $3,000,000 annually to young investigators, fellows, and nephrology educators who will fuel innovation and translate research and discovery into improved quality of life for patients.

Besides tangible member benefits, ASN offers hope to the 850,000,000 people with kidney diseases, excitement for the next generation of kidney health professionals, and more confidence amongst our industry partners that the kidney arena is ripe for investment.

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**American Society for Nephrology**

- **Founded:** 1966
- **Location:** Washington, D.C.
- **Mission:** ASN leads the fight to prevent, treat, and cure kidney diseases throughout the world by educating health professionals and scientists, advancing research and innovation, communicating new knowledge, and advocating for the highest quality care for patients.

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**Federal Government Should Support Research to Personalize Patient Care**

How important is it for the federal government to support research and innovation that will personalize patient care - developing the right treatment for the right patient at the right time?

- **47%** Very Important
- **30%** Somewhat Important
- **12%** Not Too Important
- **8%** Not Sure
- **4%** Not At All Important

**SOURCE:** A RESEARCH!AMERICA SURVEY OF U.S. ADULTS CONDUCTED IN PARTNERSHIP WITH ZOGBY ANALYTICS IN JANUARY 2018. DUE TO ROUNDING, THE TOTAL MAY NOT ADD TO 100%.
Urge Congress to Complete FY19 Appropriations

Members of Congress have made solid progress on appropriations legislation for Fiscal Year 2019 (FY19) federal programs. However, funding for critical science agencies like FDA and NSF are currently being flat-funded under a continuing resolution. Encourage your elected officials to pass all remaining FY19 funding bills, ending the funding stagnation that squanders crucial scientific progress.