



February 18, 2016

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**IN MEMORIAM**

Jack T. Watters, MD

Dear Chairman Blunt, Ranking Member Murray, and Members of the Senate Subcommittee on Labor, Health and Human Services, Education, and Related Agencies,

We are writing on behalf of Research!America, the nation's largest nonprofit alliance working to accelerate medical progress and strengthen our nation's commitment to research and public health. The more than 360 member organizations that comprise Research!America appreciate the complexity of the funding decisions that fall under the jurisdiction of the Labor, Health and Human Services, Education, and Related Agencies (Labor-H) Subcommittee, and are grateful for your demonstrated, bipartisan commitment to advancing the nation's best interests. As you consider Fiscal Year 2017 (FY17) appropriations, we ask that you take the following requests into consideration.

Because of your vision and commitment, the FY16 Omnibus Appropriations bill increased the budget of the National Institutes of Health by 6 percent or \$2 billion. If our nation builds on that pivotal accomplishment, we can defeat illnesses that rob Americans of health, hope, and time. We believe that funding for NIH should grow by at least 10 percent in FY17. To achieve this increase, it is crucial to continue your lifesaving efforts to rebuild annual appropriations for NIH, growing the Institutes' base budget by at least \$2.4 billion or 5 percent after inflation is taken into account.

This increase is key; it will help restore lost purchasing power, rebuild a solid foundation for sustained progress, and assure that the benefits of NIH-funded research convey broadly. We also fully support supplemental mandatory funding to amplify the impact of annual budget increases, enabling our nation to capitalize on recent breakthroughs in order to make unprecedented progress against cancer and other virulent health threats.

Research!America believes a 10 percent increase is merited by the magnitude of our health challenges, the cost of inaction, and the extraordinary return on medical progress. Alzheimer's, cancer, lupus, arthritis, diabetes, ALS and a host of other diseases -- some prevalent and others rare -- must be stopped. Our nation cannot afford the trillions of tax dollars these illnesses drain from our coffers as they wreak havoc on the lives of patients and their loved ones. And medical research delivers economic and health benefits to Americans and populations throughout the world that endure and redouble; knowledge gained now becomes the foundation for further progress.

One terrific example is the funding invested in sequencing the human genome. The knowledge unleashed by that funding is enabling progress not just against one illness, but against thousands of health challenges. And the benefits accrue not only to patients today, but to generations of patients in the US and throughout the world. There are many other examples. How many lives have and will be saved by vaccines, antibiotics, statins, insulin, imaging, stents, pacemakers, and other medical advances? We firmly believe our nation has been grossly underinvesting relative to the compelling need for, and benefits of, medical progress. It is time to recalibrate.

1101 King Street  
Suite 520  
Alexandria, VA 22314-2960  
P 703.739.2577  
F 703.739.2372  
E [info@researchamerica.org](mailto:info@researchamerica.org)  
[www.researchamerica.org](http://www.researchamerica.org)

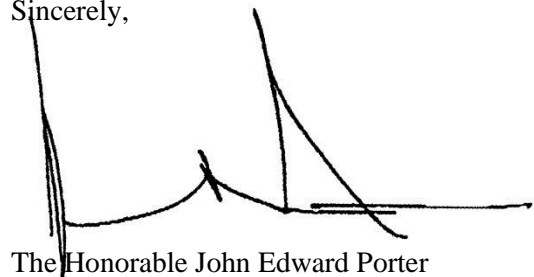
The logic is equally compelling for funding increases that strengthen the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and the Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality (AHRQ). These two agencies play critically important roles in protecting the nation's public health and making local, state, and national healthcare systems safer and more efficient.

We request that you provide at least \$7.8 billion for CDC in FY17, an increase of \$620 million or 8.6% percent over FY16 funding. Since its conception 70 years ago, CDC has saved lives and protected Americans from health, safety, and security threats. Their purview encompasses many facets of daily life, ranging from mining safety and accident prevention to vaccine development and on-the-ground public health response teams. CDC's efforts played a major role in the near eradication of polio, significantly reducing tobacco use, lowering teen pregnancy rates, and reducing deaths from motor vehicle accidents. Between 1994 and 2013, CDC was credited with preventing over 21 million hospitalizations and over 730,000 early deaths with life-saving vaccines. In an ever globalized society, CDC leadership in public health research and response has served as the gold standard for other nations to embody, a hallmark testament to American ingenuity and governance. These are but a few examples of CDC's value. With emerging public health threats such as Ebola, Zika, Lassa fever and yellow fever affecting Americans and the populations throughout the world, the need to provide robust financial support of CDC has never been greater. We request that you provide at least \$7.8 billion for CDC in FY17, a strategic investment in the health and security of the American people.

There is also great need for AHRQ to receive greater federal investment. Research!America requests that you provide at least \$364 million for AHRQ in FY17 to restore the cuts made in FY16 and begin empowering AHRQ to leverage more life and cost-saving health services research on behalf of the American people. The stakes could not be higher: If we underinvest in AHRQ, we are inviting needlessly higher rates of medical error, unnecessary health spending, and preventable lags in the dissemination of new medical knowledge and treatment advances. A commitment is desperately needed to address weaknesses in our nation's healthcare system that cost lives and dollars, rather than cutting funding for an agency crucial to finding solutions. Over the past five years, AHRQ-funded research has led to identifying what medications are most effective at treating prostate cancer, implementing multi-state electronic health record systems, and identifying the risks are for pediatric chemotherapy patients. We ask that you demonstrate your commitment to cost-saving and life-saving research by providing at least \$364 million for AHRQ in FY17.

We thank you and your respective staffs for your hard work and for your consideration of these funding requests. We appreciate that these decisions are not easy, and we laud your continued efforts to place medical progress at the forefront of your priorities.

Sincerely,



The Honorable John Edward Porter  
Member of Congress 1980-2001



Mary Woolley  
President and CEO Research!America