



November 12, 2014

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The Honorable John Boehner
Speaker
United States House of Representatives

The Honorable Nancy Pelosi
Democratic Leader
United States House of Representatives

The Honorable Harry Reid
Majority Leader
United States Senate

The Honorable Mitch McConnell
Republican Leader
United States Senate

Dear Mr. Speaker, Democratic Leader Pelosi, Majority Leader Reid and Republican Leader McConnell:

On behalf of Research!America, the nation's largest public education and advocacy alliance committed to accelerating medical progress, we thank you for your leadership and your dedication to advancing our nation's priorities. As the December 11 expiration of the current fiscal year 2015 continuing resolution (CR) approaches, we urge you to pass an omnibus appropriations bill that boosts funding for the National Institutes of Health (NIH), the Centers of Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), the Food and Drug Administration (FDA), the Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality (AHRQ) and the National Science Foundation (NSF). These agencies play a vital role in our nation's health research enterprise, and, thus, have a major impact on the health and wellbeing of the American people.

The importance of research-enabled medical progress has rightly been in the spotlight because of the Ebola outbreak. But a bipartisan decision to meaningfully increase our nation's investment in health research in fiscal year 2015 is warranted not only by the wakeup call that is Ebola, but by the pragmatic imperatives of preventing an explosion in the nation's deficit and debt, and strengthening our nation's economic potential.

Diabetes and Alzheimer's disease alone will dramatically inflate Medicare spending over the coming decades, severely limiting our capacity to achieve a balanced budget and meaningful debt reduction, unless we harness research to prevent, delay and end these increasingly prevalent and costly health conditions.

And investments in the noncommercial research that fuels private-sector medical innovation is a sound strategy for bolstering our economy and growing jobs. In any given funding cycle, federal grants push noncommercial research over the finish line, providing the clues the private sector follows to develop commercial medical advances. According to a July 2014 report by Battelle, the bioscience

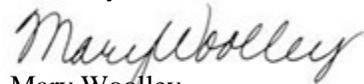
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sector of our economy directly employs 1.62 million Americans, and each bioscience-sector job has a multiplier effect on the economy, generating an additional 3.9 million jobs. The bioscience sector has a strong footprint across our nation, and as export capacity becomes increasingly important to global competitiveness, the bioscience sector will take on greater significance in strengthening the U.S. economy.

While these considerations are crucially important, there is a more fundamental reason for Congress to come together in support of U.S. health research: doing so is consistent with deeply held American values. Recommitting to medical progress honors the American tradition of bequeathing to future generations the gift of longer, healthier and productive lives.

We fully support efforts to ensure that all federal spending, including spending by NIH, CDC, AHRQ, FDA and NSF, is held to the highest standards of transparency and accountability. The accountability imperative should complement increased investment – vigilance is always called for to maximize the return on federal investment – but it must not be used as an excuse to delay or neglect such investment. To protect our people, provide better lives for our children and future generations, and secure our economic future, our nation must treat health research as a strategic priority and significantly bolster our investment in it. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Mary Woolley".

Mary Woolley
President and CEO