Sequestration is Not the Only Hurdle for the Research Enterprise

Research has been in the news lately, not only because of the impacts of current law—the Budget Control Act’s caps on overall discretionary spending, reduced further by annual across-the-board budget cuts known as sequestration—but because policymakers have floated other proposals that would also have dramatic implications for the research enterprise.

For example, some influential members of the House are considering draft legislation that would fundamentally change the grant-awarding process at the National Science Foundation. The High Quality Research Act, drafted by Rep. Lamar Smith (R-TX), chair of the House science committee, would require the NSF director to certify that all grants serve national security or other discrete goals before providing funding for a project. Many scientists are working to convince the committee that such criteria would stifle discovery, disqualifying basic science that aims to lay the groundwork for any number of...

Continued on page 4

William Hait Elected to Research!America Board of Directors

Noted oncologist William Hait, MD, PhD, global head of Janssen Research & Development—part of the Janssen Pharmaceutical Companies of Johnson & Johnson—has been elected to the Research!America Board of Directors.

Prior to joining Janssen, Hait was founding director of The Cancer Institute of New Jersey and a professor at the medical school of the University of Medicine and Dentistry of New Jersey. He has served as an advisor or on committees for numerous groups, including the Susan G. Komen Foundation, the American Society of Clinical Oncology, the Association of American Cancer Institutes, and the National Cancer Institute Board of Scientific Advisors. He is currently treasurer of the American Association for Cancer Research and served as president from 2007 to 2008.

“Dr. Hait is an exceptional leader; we are fortunate to have him join us and contribute his time and expertise as a Board member,” said Mary Woolley, president and CEO of Research!America. “We look forward to his contributions as we work to raise the priority of medical research and innovation in a tough economic climate.”

Four in 10 Say Sequestration is Not a Smart Strategy to Reduce Debt

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SOURCE: A RESEARCH!AMERICA ONLINE SURVEY OF SMALL BUSINESS OWNERS CONDUCTED IN PARTNERSHIP WITH ZOGBY ANALYTICS IN FEBRUARY 2013.
The generation of the Parkinson’s Action Network (PAN) goes back to 1987, four years before the organization’s founding. That year, Joan Samuelson left a career in law after being diagnosed with Parkinson’s disease; she threw her might into advocating for people living with Parkinson’s. Four years later, PAN was born, and its advocacy continues today.

PAN is a unique organization in the patient advocacy world; it represents the entire Parkinson’s community on funding and quality of life policy priorities for those living with the disease. PAN works with other national Parkinson’s organizations and is the only organization addressing government programs and policies that impact the community.

“We’ve worked on a vision that if our community came together on policy issues, with one, singular voice, we would be much more effective,” said PAN CEO Amy Comstock Rick, JD, who became a Research!America Board member in March. “Really in the last 10 years, we’ve been able to effectively achieve that mission so that PAN is the only organization in the Parkinson’s community that works on policy issues, even though we have a number of national organizations.”

Augmenting its policy expertise is PAN’s robust grassroots network, with directors and assistant directors at the state level and volunteers in key congressional districts. But, Rick points out, PAN does not maintain its own chapters; rather, consistent with its goal of unification, it relies on the chapter structures of the other national organizations to reach the community.

“PAN does advocacy work through our grassroots leaders,” Rick said. “… Without these advocates, the Parkinson’s community couldn’t accomplish all of the work we do each year. These advocates are the core of PAN.”

The chance to network beyond the community and beyond Washington are key reasons for PAN’s membership with Research!America.

“Our structure is so unique … the goals of Research!America are really the same goals in terms of a unified voice. Research!America gives us not only the opportunity to work with other disease organizations,” Rick said, “it also is a great way for us to work with other members of the community who have the same ultimate goal, which is getting therapies out there … You have to get to know people and see things from their perspective, and having an organization like Research!America that brings us together really adds value to that.”


Research!America Adds Value

Research!America stands on a reputation of innovative advocacy that generates results serving our mission and the interests of our members:

- Our National Health Research Forum, to be held September 12 at the Newseum in Washington, DC, brings together thought leaders—federal agency leaders, nonprofit executives, researchers, key media and others—to examine the landscape for research to improve health. Learn more at www.researchamerica.org/forums.
- Research!America has conducted public opinion polling since 1992, including numerous national surveys and polling in 44 states and the District of Columbia. Our polling asks Americans for their thoughts on research, public health, global health and other topics concerning research to improve health.
Memorial Day Congressional Recess
For the congressional recess, Research!America President and CEO Mary Woolley conducted interviews with radio stations in key congressional districts to call attention to sequestration’s impact to medical innovation. NPR affiliates WFPL-FM (Louisville, KY), KPBX-FM (Spokane, WA), WVAS-FM (Montgomery, AL), KSTX-FM (Texas Public Radio), KDAQ-FM (Shreveport, LA) and WCVE-FM (Richmond, VA), news/talk radio station WLPO-AM (Ottawa, IL), and The Portland (OR) Tribune interviewed Woolley about the sequester and advocacy activities to make research a higher national priority.

Poll Data and Young Scientists
National Institutes of Health Director Francis Collins, MD, PhD, mentioned Research!America’s poll data during a segment on The Diane Rehm Show about the BRAIN Initiative. Mary Woolley was interviewed on NPR’s Marketplace Money Report about the impact of sequestration on young scientists.

Research!America Hosts NTD Panel in Louisiana
Research!America hosted two panel discussions May 15 at Tulane University in New Orleans to highlight the health and economic impact of neglected tropical diseases in the region. The event was covered by The (Baton Rouge) Advocate, Discover Magazine’s blog and New Orleans CBS affiliate WWL-TV.

Statement on President Obama’s FY14 Budget Proposal
Mary Woolley’s statement on the president’s budget was featured in Bloomberg BNA, The Cancer Letter, The Chronicle of Higher Education, Personal Liberty Digest, ScienceInsider and UPI.

Rally for Medical Research
Several media outlets covered Research!America Chair John Porter’s speech during the Rally for Medical Research on April 8 including The Cancer Letter, PhRMA’s Catalyst blog; Washington, DC, FOX affiliate WTTG-TV; GenomeWeb Daily News, The Hill’s Healthwatch, Medscape Today, Oncology Times, Scrip Intelligence and The Washington Times.

Chronic Pain and Addiction National Public Opinion Poll
Research!America’s chronic pain national poll data received extensive media coverage in The Hill’s Healthwatch, National Pain Report, Test Country blog, IT World, Southern California Public Radio, Daily Rx, News Medical and Medical Xpress.

Advocates Speak Out Against Sequestration
Research!America Board member Elias Zerhouni, MD, president of global research & development at Sanofi, and Michael Milken wrote an op-ed in The Baltimore Sun about medical research suffering under the sequester.

Research!America Board member Georges Benjamin, MD, was quoted about the impact of cuts on public health in Politico. Leroy Hood, MD, PhD, president of the Institute for Systems Biology, authored an op-ed on The Hill’s Congress Blog titled, “Medical science may be answer to budget woes.”

Larry J. Shapiro, MD, a Research!America Board member and executive vice chancellor for medical affairs at Washington University in St. Louis, was interviewed in The Huffington Post about the sequester slowing down genomics research.

Communities from coast to coast are experiencing sequestration-driven furloughs and layoffs. But there is very little recognition that, absent new legislation, sequestration is in place for 10 years—things will get much worse. I know from media interviews I’ve done during our Memorial Day recess campaign that people don’t yet connect the dots—they don’t see that their hopes and expectations for medical progress are being slowly dashed by sequestration. And they don’t realize that the current House appropriations plan for agencies like the NIH and CDC could cut another 20% or more from those agencies’ budgets beginning on October 1. A cut like that means jobs across the bioscience sector lost forever, an end to a great deal of science and to the careers of great scientists. Other nations’ plans to overtake U.S. leadership in the life sciences would be closer to realization. It means squandering efforts to bend the cost curve by preventing costly diseases like Alzheimer’s.

The question is: Are we on a course that can’t be reversed? Is there so much unstoppable momentum to budget cuts that cures will be cut as well? I believe the current course can be reversed if the stakeholder community speaks out more loudly and relentlessly against the sequester and against the new House appropriations plans. We cannot assume that this extraordinary new House plan will never happen; that’s what people said about sequestration! We are making it easy for advocates to get involved—the summer is a critical time—via social media. Check out #curesnotcuts and spread the word. Stay optimistic; the public remains supportive of research.

Mary Woolley
Sequestration Hurdles
Continued from page 1

beneficial purposes that cannot be predicted in advance.

And social science remains under fire, as evidenced by the original version of the Kids First Research Act of 2013. The initial bill would have banned health economics research funded by the National Institutes of Health. Research!America appreciates that this restriction was removed before the current version of the bill was introduced. Health economics research is crucial to efficient, effective health care and health care systems, as well as ensuring the efficiency and effectiveness of research itself.

While it is not surprising that it is taking time for the adverse impact of sequestration to surface, it is frustrating that—absent profligate evidence—policy makers appear to be accepting sequestration as a given. That means 10 years of mindless cuts to NIH, NSF, the National Science Foundation, and the Food and Drug Administration, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, and the Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality, despite the essential role they play as a counterweight to public health crises and a catalyst to private sector innovation. It makes no sense. And that’s why it must be repealed.

The cuts at NIH—so far this year, 6.2% fewer research grants have been funded—provides a telling example of sequestration’s counterproductive effects. This comes at a time when the increasing prevalence of medical conditions, such as Alzheimer’s disease, comprises one of our nation’s greatest fiscal and societal challenges. We should be investing more in research to conquer these conditions, not less. Sequestration isn’t smart; it’s a self-imposed setback to human and fiscal progress.

CPH Foundation Update
The CPH Foundation recently helped organize a panel briefing on prenatal nutrition on Capitol Hill. Rep. Jim McGovern (D-MA) opened the event on behalf of the members of the Congressional Study Group on Public Health; McGovern, along with Reps. Lucille Roybal-Allard (D-CA) and Bill Cassidy, MD (R-LA), serve as co-chairs for the group. Presentations were made by Coleen Boyle, PhD, director of the National Center on Birth Defects and Developmental Disabilities at CDC; Martelle Esposito, MPH, public policy nutritionist at the National WIC Association; and Daniel Raiten, PhD, health scientist administrator at the National Institute of Child Health and Human Development.

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Agency</th>
<th>FY13 Final Budget Authority</th>
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* CDC core budget. The House bill terminated funding for the Prevention and Public Health Fund.
** Excludes funding from transfers.
Research!America Announces Inaugural Advocacy Academy

Research!America is seeking 10 to 12 postdoctoral fellows for its inaugural Advocacy Academy, to be held in mid-September. Participants will learn about the federal budget and appropriations process, tools for effective science communication and outreach, and how to engage with elected representatives on scientific and research issues. The participants will also attend Research!America’s National Health Research Forum, to be held Sept. 12.

All travel expenses will be provided and arranged by Research!America through an educational grant provided by Pfizer, Inc.

The deadline for applications is 5 p.m. EDT on July 3. To learn more about the applications process and eligibility requirements, visit www.researchamerica.org/advocacyacademy.

Board Members, Agency Heads Make the List of Influential Physician Executives

Research!America Board members Georges Benjamin, MD, and James Madara, MD, were named to Modern Healthcare’s 50 Most Influential Physician Executives list for 2013. Madara was ranked 24th, while Benjamin was ranked 40th. Former Research!America director Darrell Kirch, MD, was ranked 31st and emeritus director Reed Tuckson, MD, was ranked 41st.

Several government leaders made the list as well: Thomas Frieden, MD, MPH, director of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, was third; Surgeon General Regina Benjamin, MD, was 12th; Francis Collins, MD, PhD, director of the National Institutes of Health, was 14th; and Margaret Hamburg, MD, commissioner of the Food and Drug Administration, was 47th.

Oregon Gov. John Kitzhaber, MD, topped the list. The only other elected official was Rep. Michael Burgess, MD (R-TX), chair of the Congressional Health Care Caucus; he was 48th.

ARISE 2 Report: Integrating Life Sciences, Physical Sciences will Accelerate Innovation

A new report from the American Academy of Arts and Sciences, titled “ARISE 2: Unleashing America’s Research and Innovation Enterprise,” makes 11 recommendations to spur research and innovation by identifying the challenges and opportunities before researchers in the life sciences and the physical sciences.

Each of the recommendations fit under two overarching goals: moving from interdisciplinary research to transdisciplinary research and promoting cooperation among academia, government and the private sector throughout the discovery and development process. Moving to transdisciplinary research will require broader policies in knowledge access, education, facilities and personnel; promoting cooperation will require incentivizing partnerships among stakeholders and breaking down barriers and potential conflicts between stakeholders.

Download the full report at www.amacad.org/arise2.pdf.
Research!America Board member The Hon. Kweisi Mfume was elected chair of the Board of Regents at Morgan State University.

***

National Institutes of Health Director Francis Collins, MD, PhD, is asking for stories on how the sequester is impacting biomedical research via Twitter using the hashtag #NIHSequesterImpact.

***

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention released the final 2012 national surveillance data for West Nile virus activity. The number of West Nile cases reported last year is the highest since 2003.

***

The NIH awarded four research centers with $40 million in grants to reduce stroke disparities in the U.S.

***

According to the White House’s Federal Taxpayer Receipt, 1.4% of tax dollars were spent on health research and food safety.

UK to Use G-8 Presidency to Address Dementia

The United Kingdom, which holds the presidency for the group of leading industrial nations known as the G-8, has announced it will use the presidency to develop a new international approach to researching dementia. The U.K. will also host a dementia-specific summit in London in September, bringing together government officials, experts and the Organisation for Economic Co-Operation and Development.

“If the brightest minds are working together on this then we’ve got a greater chance of improving treatments and finding scientific breakthroughs,” Prime Minister David Cameron, who launched the U.K.-wide Dementia Challenge in March 2012, said in a statement. “I’ve said before that we need an all-out fight-back against dementia that cuts across society. Now we need to cut across borders and spearhead an international approach that could really make a difference.”

George Vradenburg, chairman of USAgainstAlzheimer’s, welcomed the development.

“The international plan announced … by the United Kingdom represents one of the biggest and most promising developments thus far in the global fight against Alzheimer’s and dementia,” Vradenburg said in a statement. “The size and scope of this disease will require unprecedented collaboration across governments, [non-governmental organizations] and industry united in an effort to stop the impending global epidemic that is on the scale of HIV/AIDS.”

Research!America Leadership Honors Graduates

The Hon. John Edward Porter, Research!America chair, and Mary Woolley, Research!America president and CEO, appeared at separate commencements this spring.

Porter was honored by the Morehouse School of Medicine in Atlanta with an honorary degree, along with University of Maryland, Baltimore County President Freeman A. Hrabowski III, PhD.

Woolley served as the commencement speaker for the University at Buffalo School of Medicine and Biomedical Sciences ceremony. In her speech, she urged graduates to step out of their comfort zone and advocate for medical research.

Majority: Chronic Pain Tends to be Dismissed by Doctors, Public

Which statement is closer to your view?

- Chronic pain is overstated as a health condition: 16%
- Chronic pain tends to be dismissed by doctors and the public: 60%
- Not sure: 24%

AACR Academy Names Inaugural Class of Fellows

The American Association for Cancer Research Academy has named 106 distinguished researchers to its inaugural class of fellows. The 106 fellows represent the age of the organization upon establishment of the academy.

Included in the list is current Research!America Board member William Hait, MD, PhD and former Board member Carol Greider, PhD. Several former Advocacy Award winners were also among the fellows: David Baltimore, PhD, winner of the 2009 Builders of Science Award; Paul Berg, PhD, winner of the 2003 Sustained Leadership at the National Level award; J. Michael Bishop, MD, winner of the 2011 Raymond and Beverly Sackler Award for Sustained National Leadership; and John Mendelsohn, MD, winner of the 2013 Geoffrey Beene Builders of Science Award.

Geoffrey Beene Challenge Announced

The Geoffrey Beene Foundation Alzheimer’s Initiative announced an innovative online challenge asking solvers to identify male/female differences in early cognitive decline. The 2013 Geoffrey Beene Global NeuroDiscovery Challenge will award $100,000 in prizes to be shared by up to five finalists; one winning solution, announced in late fall 2013, will receive $50,000. Tom Hutton, trustee and CEO of the Geoffrey Beene Foundation and president and CEO of Geoffrey Beene, LLC, said in a statement that “most researchers agree that the greatest potential to stop Alzheimer’s lies in the earliest stages of the disease … We must redefine the solutions process and free the greatest minds of our time to do the work to help save and improve lives.” To learn more, visit http://geoffreybeenecchallenge.org.

Clinical Research Forum Announces Top 10 Achievements in 2012

Three researchers from Massachusetts General Hospital, a Research!America member, were among those honored by the Clinical Research Forum’s Top 10 Clinical Research Achievement Awards for 2012. Among them is Leigh Hochberg, MD, who was awarded the Herbert Pardes Clinical Research Excellence Award; Herbert Pardes, MD, is a member of the Research!America Board. Jean Bennett, MD, PhD, of the University of Pennsylvania and Robert Brodsky, MD, of Johns Hopkins Medicine received the Distinguished Clinical Research Achievement Award. Other institutions represented in the top 10 include Yale School of Medicine, the University of Pittsburgh, the University of North Carolina and Columbia University Medical Center/NewYork-Presbyterian Hospital.

Wide Majority Says Government Should Encourage STEM Careers

Do you believe the federal government should increase funding for programs aimed at encouraging and enabling more young Americans to pursue careers in science, technology, engineering and mathematics?

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Source: A Research!America online survey of small business owners conducted in partnership with Zogby Analytics in February 2013. (Totals do not add to 100% due to rounding.)
Coming September 10-12, 2013—
Research!America Advocacy Academy, Washington, DC.

www.researchamerica.org/advocacyacademy

September 12, 2013—
2013 National Health Research Forum, Washington, DC.
www.researchamerica.org/forums

Advocacy & Action

Tell Congress Medical Progress is an American Priority

With sequestration now in effect, across-the-board cuts have sliced billions from the budgets of NIH, CDC, NSF, AHRQ and FDA. As previously noted, these are not one-year cuts; if action isn’t taken to stop sequestration, federal funding for biomedical and health research will be cut each year through 2023. This cannot stand. Policy makers will be making more decisions about funding that could help reverse the effects of this year’s sequestration and stop future across-the-board cuts. Weigh in and help convince federal leaders to champion progress instead of stalling it.

During the Memorial Day recess, Research!America ran a successful social media campaign on Facebook and Twitter using the hashtag #curesnotcuts. We encourage you and your organization to join similar campaigns (such as NIH Director Francis Collins’ #NIHSequesterImpact) or to start your own! For more advocacy ideas, go to www.saveresearch.org or our advocacy tips at www.researchamerica.org/advocacy101.

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Become a fan on Facebook: www.researchamerica.org/facebook
Watch our YouTube channel: www.youtube.com/researchamerica
Visit our blog: www.researchamerica.org/blog
Investment in research saves lives and money

facts about:

Obesity – updated 2013

“If you think research is expensive, try disease.”

– Mary Lasker 1901-1994

Today:

- More than 78 million adults (or 35.7%) and more than 12.5 million children (or 16.9%) in the U.S. are classified as obese.  
- Obesity is officially defined as having body fat above 32% for women, 25% for men, 30% for girls and 25% for boys.  
- By increasing the risk for cardiovascular diseases, Type 2 diabetes and most cancers, obesity contributes to 1 in 10 deaths, making it the second leading cause of preventable death in the U.S.  
- Obese individuals with diabetes or high blood pressure have a 26% greater risk of death than healthy-weight individuals.  

Sources:  

How Research Saves Lives:

- According to research cited in The Obesity Task Force Strategic plan from the National Institutes of Health, a 5-10% decrease in body weight can lower blood pressure and prevent Type 2 diabetes.  
- Research funded by the National Institutes of Health has shown that surgical treatment of obesity can reduce the long-term risk of mortality by 40%.  
- Research supported by the CDC, the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation and the Bower Foundation demonstrates that, after implementing strong nutrition and physical activity standards, cities and states reduced their childhood obesity rates. Over a 5-year period, obesity rates dropped in Philadelphia (-4.7%), New York City (-5.5%), California (-1.1%) and Mississippi (-13.3%).  

Sources:  

How Research Saves Money:

- Studies have shown that preventing as few as 5% of new cases of chronic conditions, including obesity and related complications, would reduce Medicare and Medicaid spending by nearly $5.5 billion a year by 2030.  
- Research shows that an obese individual with diabetes who undergoes a surgical procedure to restrict the size of the stomach (with the installation of a gastric band) can decrease medical expenditures by approximately $34,000 over a 5-year period after the device is implanted.  

Sources:  

Survivor:

NAME: Patrick Sauer  
AGE: 44  
CONDITION: Obesity

Growing up outside of Seattle, Patrick has been morbidly obese his entire life due to an eating disorder. He didn’t date or go to his high school prom; he became complacent with his condition. At times, Patrick has weighed more than 500 pounds. It wasn’t until a conversation with his doctor that he recognized his behavior was killing him and he asked for help.

Patrick had great success at the University of Washington’s Bariatric Center. Since his Roux-En-Y Gastric Bypass in 2010, he has lost more than 235 pounds. He no longer needs to treat himself for diabetes, thyroid malfunction or edema. Since the surgery, he estimates that he is spending approximately $2,000 less per month. Those savings come from not purchasing medications, avoiding expenses associated with his conditions and reduced food intake. Since the surgery, Patrick has been able to buy pants off the rack (custom ordered pants with a 68-inch waist could cost $150 a pair) and he is more active than ever. This past holiday season, Patrick took a flight to visit family. He didn’t have to purchase two seats on the plane and was able to buckle himself in, both for the first time.

Patrick believes he would not be here today if he hadn’t undergone the surgery. He credits the research leading to the gastric bypass technique for saving his life, functionally curing him of diabetes, alleviating fears of heart disease, curing the edema in his legs and correcting his thyroid problems. He is glad to be part of ongoing studies through the University of Washington as well as outreach and education for individuals considering Roux-En-Y Gastric Bypass.
Screening for Obesity:

For research purposes, individuals are classified as obese based on the Body Mass Index (BMI). BMI is calculated from a person’s weight and height and correlates to direct measures of body fat.\(^1\)\(^2\) BMI is useful as a population-level assessment of obesity because it is inexpensive, easy to obtain, and is the same for both sexes and all ages of adults. However, another measure of obesity that has been shown to better predict health risk is waist-to-height ratio to assess abdominal fat.\(^3\) Excess abdominal fat is a significant risk factor for Type 2 diabetes and cardiovascular disease. For children and adults, health risks increase when waist size is more than half of their height.

SOURCES:  

Hope for the Future:

- In 2012, two new appetite suppressant drugs (Qsymia and Lorcaserin) were approved by the Food and Drug Administration. These medicines, the first such drugs approved in 13 years, can help reduce obesity and resulting complications.\(^1\)
- Researchers at the University of Mississippi recently found in preliminary studies that Sunitinib, normally used to treat cancer, is also able to block blood delivery to fat tissue, causing a 70% loss of fat in mice. In addition to the weight loss, Sunitinib also seemed to cause a reduction in appetite, possibly a side effect due to hormonal changes.\(^2\)

SOURCES:  
\(^1\) FOOD AND DRUG ADMINISTRATION (WWW.FDA.GOV).  
\(^2\) AMERICAN PHYSIO SOC. (2013, APRIL 23). DRUG REDUCES FAT BY BLOCKING BLOOD VESSELS. SCIENCEDAILY.