

Testimony of Research!America to the Senate Committee on Appropriations Subcommittee on
Labor, Health and Human Services, Education, and Related Agencies
Concerning FY17 Appropriations for NIH, CDC, and AHRQ
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Contact: Caitlin M. Leach, Director of Policy and Advocacy, Research!America

On behalf of Research!America, the nation's largest not for profit education and advocacy alliance working to accelerate medical progress and strengthen our nation's public health system, thank you for this opportunity to share our views on Fiscal Year 2017 (FY17) appropriations under the jurisdiction of the Subcommittee on Labor, Health and Human Services, Education, and Related Agencies.

The National Institutes of Health (NIH) drives the discovery of new treatments and cures

NIH is the world's leading funder of basic biomedical research, and Americans appreciate the value this research delivers. Since 1992, Research!America has commissioned national and state-level surveys to gauge public sentiment on issues related to health research and innovation. One of the most consistent findings over time has been Americans' support for basic research. In a survey commissioned in January 2015, 70 percent of respondents agreed that "even if it brings no immediate benefits, basic scientific research that advances the frontiers of knowledge is necessary and should be supported by the federal government."

More than 80 percent of NIH funding is awarded through almost 50,000 competitive grants to 300,000 researchers at more than 2,500 universities, medical schools, and other research institutions in every state and around the world. Research supported by NIH is typically at the early, non-commercial stages of the research pipeline; therefore, NIH funding complements critical private sector investment and development. The NIH also plays an essential role in educating and training America's future scientists and medical innovators. In 2015, NIH sponsored over 5,000 training grants and fellowships for biomedical- and health-focused graduate and medical students, postdoctoral researchers and young investigators— a pivotal investment in America's future research workforce.

We believe it is in the strategic interests of the United States to increase funding for NIH by at least 10 percent in FY17. To achieve this increase, it is crucial to continue your successful efforts to rebuild annual appropriations for NIH, growing the Institutes' base budget in FY17 by at least \$2.4 billion or 5 percent after inflation is taken into account. Research!America believes this increase is merited by the magnitude of our health challenges, the cost of inaction and the extraordinary return on medical progress.

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) safeguards the nation's health

CDC is tasked with safeguarding the nation's health, and over the past 70 years it has worked diligently to thwart deadly outbreaks, costly pandemics and debilitating disease. Moreover, CDC plays a key role in research that leads to life-saving vaccines, bolsters defenses against bioterrorism and improves health tracking and data analytics. CDC's work has hastened many

health and safety improvements, such as lowering teen pregnancy rates, reducing deaths from motor vehicle accidents, lowering tobacco use and preventing millions of hospitalizations.

Ebola, Zika, Dengue fever and other emerging health threats have shown just how critical CDC is to our nation, and have also revealed the enormity of the challenge the agency faces as it works to safeguard American lives. To protect Americans, CDC needs to have a global reach; CDC scientists must be on the ground fighting public health challenges wherever and whenever they occur. But there is an imbalance between the funding provided to CDC and its increasingly growing mission demands. We request that CDC receive at least \$7.8 billion in FY17 to carry out its crucially important responsibilities.

AHRQ maximizes the return on medical progress

AHRQ is the lead federal agency responsible for ensuring medical progress translates into better patient care. Medical discovery, development and delivery are intertwined: the value of discovery and development hinge on smart health care delivery. That's where AHRQ comes in. AHRQ-funded research is used to ensure patients receive the right care at the right time in the right settings. This research serves many critical purposes, from ensuring information about new medical discoveries reaches doctors and patients as quickly as possible, to deploying health IT to address challenges in health care access and delivery, to cutting the number of deadly – and preventable – medical errors.

If we underinvest in AHRQ, we are inviting unnecessary health care spending and squandering the opportunity to ensure patients receive the quality care they need. We ask that you commit to investing in life and cost-saving health services research by funding AHRQ at \$364 million in FY17.

Conclusion

There are few federal investments that convey benefits as important and far-reaching as funding for NIH, CDC and AHRQ: new cures, new businesses, new jobs; innovative solutions that improve health care delivery and optimize the use of limited health dollars; and a public health system nimble and sophisticated enough to meet daunting challenges to the health and safety of the American people. We appreciate your consideration of our funding requests and thank you for your stewardship over such critically important federal spending priorities.