



July 2, 2020

The Honorable Roy Blunt
Chairman
Senate Appropriations LHHS Subcommittee
U.S. Senate
Washington, D.C. 20510

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The Honorable Patty Murray
Ranking Member
Senate Appropriations LHHS Subcommittee
U.S. Senate
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Chairman Blunt and Ranking Member Murray,

On behalf of the Research!America alliance, thank you for your bipartisan efforts to combat COVID-19 and address its destructive effects. We recognize the vigilance and sheer amount of work involved in confronting such a wide array of major, pandemic-related challenges, particularly when these challenges continue to mount, and we are truly grateful for your steadfast commitment and that of your respective staff members.

As you work to shape provisions of the fifth coronavirus response package under the jurisdiction of the Labor, Health and Human Services, Education and Related Agencies Subcommittee, we urge you to include funding needed to restart research stalled or reprogrammed as a result of the pandemic. As these [fact sheets](#) produced by United for Medical Research so clearly demonstrate, medical progress will surely suffer if depleted research grant funding is not restored.

Across all federal grants, at least \$26 billion is needed to secure previous research investment. If our nation does not acknowledge and address the corrosive impact of COVID-19 on existing research grants, the dollars our nation previously invested will not produce the crucial progress our nation sought. In effect, COVID-19 will win out over patients, US scientific and economic competitiveness, and national health security.

Another urgent priority is to secure our nation's public health system. Our nation is fortunate that this system is anchored by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), an agency that, despite years of grossly inadequate funding, has sustained top talent and the capability to advance the health and safety of Americans day in and day out. Faced with the greatest public health challenge in a century, CDC has risen above serial funding neglect to play an underappreciated role in navigating and preventing COVID-19 from causing even greater harm to

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our nation and its people. It is crucial that Congress champion rather than scapegoat CDC, empowering this bedrock agency to fight COVID-19 and every public health threat confronting our nation, no holds barred.

Finally, and importantly, we urge you to bolster funding for the Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality. AHRQ leverages health services research to ensure our healthcare system is operating based on evidence and learning from disruptive events like COVID-19 so that the wheel need not be reinvented when the next pandemic hits. We need AHRQ to play a far bigger role in responding to COVID-19 by capturing the massive changes taking place in healthcare, evaluating their impact, and ensuring the entire healthcare system benefits from that evaluation. [Here](#) is a letter Senator Blumenthal sent making the case for bolstering AHRQ's role as our nation responds to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Thank you and your respective staff members again for your resolute commitment to a safer, healthier future and for your extraordinarily hard work.

Sincerely,

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

Mary Woolley
President and CEO, Research!America