

Testimony of Research!America to the House Committee on Appropriations Subcommittee on
Labor, Health and Human Services, Education, and Related Agencies
Concerning Fiscal Year 2020 Appropriations for NIH, CDC, and AHRQ

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On behalf of Research!America and our alliance, which advocates for science, discovery, and innovation to achieve better health for all, thank you for this opportunity to share our views on Fiscal Year 2020 (FY20) appropriations under the jurisdiction of the Subcommittee on Labor, Health and Human Services, Education, and Related Agencies. We are grateful that for FY19, the committee not only bolstered the base budgets of the National Institutes of Health (NIH), the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), and the Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality (AHRQ), but also provided dedicated funding for escalating threats such as the opioid crisis and antibiotic resistance and unique needs like the development of a universal flu vaccine.

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

The NIH is the world's leading funder of basic biomedical research, and Americans recognize the value this research delivers. Since 1992, Research!America has commissioned national and state-level surveys to gauge public sentiment on issues related to research and innovation.

According to a national survey we commissioned in January of 2019, 84% of Americans believe it is important for Congress and the President to assign a high priority to faster medical progress.

As it stands, our nation spends about 5 cents of each health dollar on research to prevent, cure and treat disease. Some 63% of Americans say that this level of investment is not enough, an 11

percentage point increase from just last year. Americans want medical progress, and they want the U.S. to do more to drive it.

More than 80 percent of NIH funding is awarded through almost 50,000 competitive grants to more than 300,000 researchers at over 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 while delivering substantial economic benefits. Basic research funded by the NIH fuels the entry of new drugs into the market, providing an estimated return to public investment of \$1.43 for every dollar invested. The Human Genome Project has produced \$1 trillion of economic growth—a 178-fold return on investment. The NIH also plays an essential role in educating and training America's future scientists and medical innovators by sponsoring 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.

NIH advances the interests of America and Americans in other crucial ways. For example, the All of Us Research Program at NIH is advancing the largest clinical trial in our nation's history to accelerate precision medicine and advance a host of other medical and health research objectives. The HEAL Initiative is conducting interdisciplinary research to end the opioid epidemic. The National Institute of Aging supports research on the health and well-being of older Americans and, through its Alzheimer's Disease Education and Referral Center, provides information on age-related cognitive changes and neurodegenerative disease. The Accelerating

Medicines Partnerships unites the best of the private and public sectors, streamlining collaboration between the NIH, FDA, life science companies, and non-profit organizations working to develop treatments for Alzheimer's, Type 2 diabetes, rheumatoid arthritis, lupus, and Parkinson's disease. The National Cancer Institute's Cancer Moonshot aims to accelerate research and improve our ability to prevent and detect cancer. NIH also plays a pivotal role in the development of countermeasures when epidemics and other global public health threats emerge.

We believe it is in the strategic interests of the United States to increase funding for NIH to at least \$41.6 billion in FY20, an increase of \$2.5 billion. Research!America believes this powerful infusion of funds is merited by the magnitude of our health challenges, the tangible and intangible costs of inaction, and the extraordinary return on medical progress.

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

CDC is tasked with protecting and advancing 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 our nation's defense against and response to bioterrorism, and improves health tracking and data analytics. CDC's work has benefited America and Americans in myriad ways, including eliminating the endemic spread of rubella within the United States, playing a lead role in addressing the growing threat of antibiotic resistance, dramatically reducing the incidence of child lead poisoning, providing accurate and accessible health information, tracking and containing dangerous pandemic and epidemics, reducing deaths from motor vehicle accidents,

achieving a significant expansion of newborn hearing tests and other screening measures, helping people avoid leading causes of death, and preventing millions of hospitalizations.

Ebola, Zika, dengue fever, influenza, the opioid epidemic, measles outbreaks, 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 our nation, 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 FY20, an increase of \$.5 billion, to carry out its crucially important responsibilities.

AHRQ empowers our nation to spend healthcare dollars wisely.

AHRQ is the lead federal agency responsible for ensuring medical progress translates into better patient care. The value of medical discovery and development hinge on smart health care delivery. Out of the \$3.6 trillion in annual spending on healthcare, an estimated 30% could be prevented by addressing errors and inefficiency. AHRQ-funded research identifies and addresses this diversion of limited healthcare dollars, empowering patients to receive the right care at the right time in the right settings. For example, AHRQ-funded research has helped identify methicillin-resistant *Staphylococcus aureus* (MRSA) in long-term care facilities as part of an infection control strategy that limits the exposure of MRSA-free residents in order to address the rise (1 out of every 25) of hospital patients affected by healthcare-associated infections. AHRQ-

funded research has played a pivotal role in reducing hospital-acquired conditions by nearly 1 million from 2014-2017, saving lives and \$7.7 billion in healthcare costs.

AHRQ's evidence-based tools and resources have not only helped hospitals to reduce healthcare-associated infection rates but has been crucial in shrinking emergency room wait times from hours to minutes, improving patient safety, promoting health literacy, and reducing patient falls. From ensuring new medical discoveries reach doctors and patients as quickly as possible in rural as well as urban areas, to quantifying the scope of the opioid epidemic, AHRQ serves many critical purposes. 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 provide at least \$460 million for AHRQ in FY20, an increase of \$122 million.

We appreciate your consideration of our funding requests and thank you for your stewardship over these critically important federal spending priorities.

Sincerely,

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

Mary Woolley
President and CEO
Research!America