

December 7, 2015

The Honorable Barack H. Obama
President of the United States
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue NW
Washington, DC 20500

Dear President Obama,

We respectfully request that you increase your commitment to the National Institutes of Health (NIH) to \$40.87 billion in your Fiscal Year (FY) 2017 Budget Request. This increase represents the expected investment based on the Biomedical Research and Development Price Index (BRDPI) had we continued the FY 2003 NIH funding level, our highest NIH funding rate. This funding will account for inflation while helping ensure our ability as a nation to lead the world in biomedical research.

Over the past decade, the federal government's contributions to NIH funding have failed to keep up with the rate of inflation. Furthermore, irresponsible budget cuts executed during sequestration has only compounded the situation. Coupled together, the federal government has successfully created an atmosphere that prevents us as a country from meeting our essential research objectives. Funding through FY 2014 represents a rate that is 22.1% below that of FY 2003. Underfunding the NIH has a negative and potentially long lasting impact on our nation's health and medical innovation capabilities. We cannot afford to continue down this dangerous path.

It is time to shift the paradigm and reaffirm our commitment and leadership in biomedical research. Putting NIH funding back on track will require significant new investments in the coming years such as this one. Since its inception, the NIH has made an immense contribution to increasing the life expectancy and overall health of Americans. Thanks to the NIH, we have virtually eliminated the top three causes of death from a century ago, which were influenza, tuberculosis, and gastrointestinal infections. Today, NIH funding has led to breakthroughs in cancer prevention, detection, and treatment causing death rates to fall significantly. Furthermore, researchers are on the cusp of developing a universal flu vaccine capable of providing protection from multiple flu strains. We cannot afford to lose momentum on this type of research that lies on the brink of a breakthrough.

Our work to improve our nation's health continues. This past year, NIH began the Brain Research through Advancing Innovative Neurotechnologies (BRAIN) Initiative aimed at advancing our understanding and treatments of different neurological diseases such as Alzheimer's, Parkinson's, and depression. These diseases are costing our country millions of dollars. If left unchecked, the cost of care for those diseases will continue to multiply. In 2014, Medicare and Medicaid will spend approximately \$150 billion on Alzheimer's care alone. This cost accounts for 20% of the overall Medicare spending in 2014. Despite these challenges, 300,000 non-federal scientist and technical personnel at more than 2,500 universities, hospitals, and other research institutions around the country are ready and willing to find new treatments and cures to the many diseases affecting our population.

Given the difficult budgetary decisions you face, we want to emphasize the importance that NIH research has on our society and the urgency of prioritizing NIH funding in future budget proposals. We appreciate your consideration of our request to provide at least \$40.87 billion in funding for NIH research in your FY 2017 Budget Request.

Sincerely,

JUAN VARGAS
Member of Congress

SUSAN A DAVIS
Member of Congress

SCOTT H. PETERS
Member of Congress

MARCY KAPTUR
Member of Congress

JACKIE SPEIER
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