



United for Medical Research

March 14, 2014

The Honorable Richard J. Durbin
United States Senate
711 Senate Hart Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Senator Durbin:

United for Medical Research (UMR) offers our support for the American Cures Act and the funding it provides for lifesaving medical research supported by the National Institutes of Health (NIH). As a coalition of leading research institutions, patient and health advocates, scientific organizations, and private industry, united in seeking steady increases in funding for NIH, we applaud your innovative leadership in pursuit of a stable funding source for this critical agency.

As the world's premier biomedical research agency, NIH is at the nexus of the medical innovation ecosystem, which includes 300,000 researchers supported at nearly 3,000 institutions nationwide. NIH-funded discoveries have led to astounding improvements in human health and serve as a beacon of hope for millions of patients suffering from devastating diseases and injuries. Moreover, NIH is an economic engine that has given rise to an American-led, globally competitive life science industry, which supports more than seven million high-wage American jobs and contributes \$69 billion annually to the U.S. gross domestic product.

Unfortunately, following a decade of budgets that have failed to keep pace with inflation and an additional cut of \$1.5 billion due to sequestration, which have resulted in a more than 20 percent loss in purchasing power, we are at serious risk of losing our life science preeminence and squandering our most promising scientific opportunities. As you yourself have noted, global competition is intensifying, as China, Germany, India, Singapore, Sweden, the United Kingdom and others recognize that life sciences represents a high growth industry and actively seek to wrest life sciences leadership from the United States. This funding trend is creating an innovation deficit, and UMR is gravely concerned that if it is not reversed, this deficit will have long-term and devastating consequences for maintaining our competitive edge as the global leader in medical research.

Despite this grim context, it is an extraordinarily exciting time for biomedical research. Scientists are making advances at an unprecedented pace, and there is strong, vocal support for NIH from both sides of the political spectrum and the American public. UMR believes it is time to capitalize on these opportunities and consider how to best preserve and expand our investment in medical research even in fiscally challenging times. We hope that the American Cures Act is a pivotal first step in identifying a sustainable funding pathway for NIH.

Sincerely,

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