

United for Medical Research



October 28th, 2016

Honorable Mitch McConnell
Senate Majority Leader
Washington, DC 20510

Honorable Harry Reid
Senate Minority Leader
Washington, DC 20510

Honorable John Cornyn
Senate Majority Whip
Washington, DC 20510

Honorable Richard Durbin
Senate Minority Whip
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Leaders McConnell, Reid, and Whips Cornyn and Durbin:

On behalf of United for Medical Research (UMR), we are writing to urge the Senate to seize the unique bipartisan and bicameral momentum behind the 21st Century Cures Act, and take it up when Congress returns in November.

This bill is about finding cures and improving our nation's health. It's about funding the research, discovery and innovation necessary to prevent, treat, and cure our most vexing diseases. The 21st Century Cures Act includes essential funding for the National Institutes of Health (NIH) that helps the United States remain the world's engine for medical innovation, and passage this year would provide a needed boost to critical research and breakthrough treatments, as well as hope for patients.

Amazing medical advances are happening every day because of NIH research funding, and the 21st Century Cures Act would provide an infusion of funds for this valued agency at a critical time for biomedical advancement. UMR recently identified five examples of truly [Amazing Things](#) that are on the cusp of saving lives and saving healthcare dollars: A bionic pancreas for people with type 1 diabetes; a low-cost minimally invasive universal cancer test; a bio-artificial kidney that can alleviate the need for dialysis in people with renal failure; cancer-illuminating goggles that improve surgery outcomes; and a new approach for developing a potential treatment for Duchenne muscular dystrophy. Not one of these advances would be where it is today without NIH research funding.

We have entered an era of precision medicine where intervention on an individualized level is beginning to generate story after story of children and adults whose lives have been saved through cutting-edge research advances. These human stories of triumph over disease serve to provide hope to millions of patients whose diseases and conditions

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are still waiting for the next generation of treatment or cure. Patients simply can't wait through more delay in Washington.

We believe Congress understands this opportunity, and is eager to act. The bipartisan leadership over the last two years in both the House and the Senate has been truly remarkable, and this legislation would be a crowning achievement for the 114th Congress. Putting this bill off until the next Congress likely means putting it off for the foreseeable future – a terrible outcome for our country.

This is a rare opportunity to make a real difference in the lives of all Americans. Our coalition strongly encourages immediate action on such a timely and widely supported measure. It is a clear national priority, and it must be Congress's first priority after the election.

Sincerely,

David Pugach
Director, Federal Relations
American Cancer Society Cancer Action Network, Inc.
President, United for Medical Research

Tim Fenton
Vice President, Global Government Relations
Thermo Fisher Scientific
Treasurer, United for Medical Research

Lizbet Boroughs
Associate Vice President for Federal Relations
Association of American Universities
Secretary, United for Medical Research

cc: Health, Education, Labor & Pensions Committee Chairman Lamar Alexander
Health, Education, Labor & Pensions Committee Ranking Member Patty Murray