

# United for Medical Research



March 10, 2017

President Donald J. Trump  
The White House  
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue NW  
Washington, DC 20500

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## UMR Members

AdvaMed  
Alzheimer's Association  
American Association for the  
Advancement of Science  
American Cancer Society  
Cancer Action Network  
American Heart Association  
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Action Network  
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Stanford University  
Thermo Fisher Scientific  
University of Pennsylvania  
Vanderbilt University &  
Vanderbilt University Medical Center  
Washington University in St. Louis

Dear President Trump:

As a coalition of 25 private industry, academic research institutions and patient and health advocates, we write to highlight a true gem of your Administration: the National Institutes of Health. Given its unmistakable impact on America's public health, economy and world leadership, few U.S. agencies have as great a return on investment as the NIH, and funding its mission in FY 2017 and 2018 is paramount.

After over a decade of flat funding and erosion by biomedical inflation, we ask that you leverage the investments made by Congress in FY 2016 and support a continued \$2 billion increase in FY 2017 and FY 2018. A slow and steady approach to restoring NIH's budget will help catalyze the advancements in research that will lead to cures and treatments for deadly diseases like cancer, Alzheimer's and ALS. These investments will give patients hope.

## **A Public-Private Partnership that Generates Great Discoveries**

We appreciate the important words from your Inauguration speech devoted to finding cures: "We stand at the birth of a new millennium, ready to unlock the mysteries of space, to free the Earth from the miseries of disease, and to harness the energies, industries and technologies of tomorrow." We couldn't agree more, and no American entity is more dedicated to freeing the Earth from the miseries of disease, as well as unlocking the technologies of tomorrow, than the NIH.

The mission of the NIH is to find cures and improve our nation's health. It funds research, discovery and innovation necessary to prevent, treat, and cure our most vexing diseases. Competitively awarded NIH grants go to university researchers in every state in the nation. This NIH-funded discovery-driven research is absolutely essential to our medical innovation pipeline. Academic researchers ask and answer fundamental questions that commercial entities don't have an incentive to explore without reasonable confidence the answers will translate into marketable products. The knowledge and discoveries that flow from this research in turn form the basis for much of the medical advancement and technology development that fuels America's globally competitive life sciences industry. Maintaining America's position as a global life sciences leader requires a strong federal investment in NIH research and a competitive private sector able to focus on later stage research and commercialization efforts.

## **A U.S. Economic Engine**

Research funded by the NIH is an engine for both medical and economic progress. NIH-supported research, which occurs in every state in the country, supports more than 350,000 U.S. jobs and contributes some \$60 billion annually in economic activity. A perfect example is the Human Genome Project – a signature NIH achievement – that has resulted in extraordinary health discoveries, the birth of new industries and nearly \$1 trillion in cumulative economic impacts.

Unfortunately, the demand for NIH funding far outstrips supply. For every single research proposal funded by the NIH, there are more than four others that go unfunded. While it may be impossible to measure the potential cures lost when worthy research proposals are not pursued, there is no doubt that funding additional research focused on preventing, treating and curing our most chronic and costly diseases would have a significant impact on the U.S. economy.

Each year the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services spends around \$35 billion to care for people with end-stage renal failure — an amount greater than the entire NIH budget. Nearly one in every five Medicare dollars is spent on individuals with Alzheimer’s disease or other forms of dementia. Alzheimer’s is the sixth-leading cause of death in the United States and the only cause of death among the top 10 that cannot be prevented, cured or even slowed. It also has been estimated that a one percent reduction in deaths from cancer or heart disease would be worth nearly \$500 billion to the U.S. economy.

## **Keeping America the World Leader**

The NIH is the global driver of medical innovation. However, the United States’ leadership is under threat due to a constant dollar decline in NIH funding and intensifying global competition from countries such as China, Germany, Singapore, Sweden and the United Kingdom. In recent years, these countries have both expanded their financial support for biomedical research and enacted policies to enhance their biomedical innovation ecosystems, despite tough economic times. While the United States led the Human Genome Project, China today has more gene sequencing capacity than we do, and they are making an aggressive \$9.2 billion investment to vie for world leadership in precision medicine.

To keep America’s medical research sector the envy of the world – and to keep our life sciences industry globally competitive –we must ensure steady and sustainable growth in the NIH budget over the long term.

The good news is that after 12 years of flat budgets, which resulted in a nearly 25 percent loss of purchasing power, the NIH received its first significant budget increase of \$2 billion in FY 2016. Additionally, the passage last year of the 21st Century Cures Act marked another important milestone by providing a temporary funding boost for a handful of specific NIH initiatives. However, to catch up and keep up from more than a decade of flat funding, the NIH budget requires more than a one-time shot in the arm. It requires building from the additional funds in FY 2016 and providing for a steady \$2 billion annual funding increase in FY 2017 and in future appropriations.

A strong NIH budget for FY 2017 and 2018 will help ensure that we continue making biomedical research breakthroughs a national priority, and we continue our global leadership in life sciences.

Mr. President, thank you for encouraging all Americans to dream big and to dream of the day that we have cures for our most vexing illnesses. We agree that this is not too much to hope for. United for Medical Research stands ready to partner with you to make this dream a reality.

Respectfully,

Lizbet Boroughs  
Associate Vice President for Federal Relations  
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President, United for Medical Research

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Vice President, Federal Advocacy  
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