



March 29, 2017

The Honorable Rodney Frelinghuysen
Chairman
Committee on Appropriations
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Nita Lowey
Ranking Member
Committee on Appropriations
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Tom Cole
Chairman
Labor, Health and Human Services,
Education and Related Agencies
Appropriations Subcommittee
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Rosa DeLauro
Ranking Member
Labor, Health and Human Services,
Education and Related Agencies
Appropriations Subcommittee
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Chairmen Frelinghuysen and Cole, and Ranking Members Lowey and DeLauro:

The National Coalition for Cancer Research (NCCR) strongly opposes the Administration's budget proposal which calls for a reduction in funding for the National Institutes of Health (NIH) by \$5.8 billion, or nearly 20 percent below current levels. If applied proportionally across the NIH, funding for the National Cancer Institute would be curtailed by nearly \$1 billion. If enacted, cuts of this level will have a devastating and long-lasting impact on the unprecedented advances being made on accelerating cancer research, education, prevention, detection and treatment.

Furthermore, we are in strong opposition to the proposed \$1.7 billion reduction to NIH in FY 2017, as reported by numerous media outlets, and accompanied by a "FY 17 Reductions Package" proposed by the Administration. According to the document, the Administration proposal calls for eliminating \$50 million in new Institutional Development Award (IDeA) grant funding. It also proposes decreasing NIH-funded research grants by \$1.12 billion.

The IDeA grant program is vital to the objective of broadening the geographic distribution of NIH funding for biomedical research. The program fosters health-related research and enhances the competitiveness of investigators at institutions located in states in which the aggregate success rate for applications to NIH has historically been low. The program also serves unique populations—such as rural and medically underserved communities—in these states. Reducing funding by \$50 million would cause irreparable harm to those states which have benefited greatly through IDeA grant funding.

It is important to note that NIH is currently able to invest in fewer than one in five research grant project applications deemed worthy of funding through a rigorous peer-review process. Reducing NIH-funded research grants by more than \$1 billion would greatly exacerbate the historically low success rate. Not only would this dramatically reverse decades of progress in cancer research, it would serve as a strong disincentive for young researchers to remain in the field of biomedical research.

Member Organizations

*American Association
for Cancer Research*

*American Cancer Society
Cancer Action Network*

*American Childhood
Cancer Organization*

*American College
of Radiology*

*American Society of
Clinical Oncology*

*American Society
of Hematology*

*Association of American
Cancer Institutes*

*Coalition of Cancer
Cooperative Groups*

Friends of Cancer Research

*International Cancer
Advocacy Network*

*International Myeloma
Foundation*

Kidney Cancer Association

*The Lustgarten Foundation
for Pancreatic Cancer
Research*

*Lymphoma Research
Foundation*

Melanoma Research Alliance

*Ovarian Cancer Research
Fund Alliance*

Prevent Cancer Foundation

Prostate Cancer Foundation

*The Society of Gynecologic
Oncology*

*Society for Immunotherapy
of Cancer*

*The V Foundation for
Cancer Research*

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Approximately 80 percent of NIH funding is used to conduct extramural research. Therefore, the proposal would have a significant negative impact on research being conducted across our country by biomedical research centers, universities, medical schools, hospitals and other institutions. This will, in turn, also negatively impact state and local economies and lead to the loss of countless jobs in the life sciences sector.

A 2015 article in the Journal of the American Medical Association, "*The Anatomy of Medical Research: US and International Comparisons*" concluded, "New investment is required if the clinical value of past scientific discoveries and opportunities to improve care are to be fully realized. Given international trends, the United States will relinquish its historical international lead in the next decade unless such measures are undertaken."

NCCR strongly urges Congress to reject the proposed disastrous cuts to NIH. Rather, we look forward to continuing our work with Members of Congress to complete action on the fiscal year 2017 appropriations bill, which includes a \$2 billion increase for NIH in fiscal year 2017. We also support continued funding for the 21st Century Cures Act and the Cancer Moonshot initiative.

We are living in an era of unparalleled advances in our understanding of cancer, which have led to the development of treatments that were unthinkable a short time ago such as cancer immunotherapy and targeted cancer therapeutics. We must harness the expertise, commitment and energy of the scientific and patient communities to continue and build on that knowledge.

Sincerely,

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Society of Gynecologic Oncologists
Society for Immunotherapy of Cancer
V Foundation for Cancer Research