

**Statement by the Ad Hoc Group for Medical Research on
FY 2014 Appropriations for the National Institutes of Health
Submitted March 15, 2013, for the record to the
Subcommittee on Labor, Health and Human Services, Education and Related Agencies
Committee on Appropriations
United States House of Representatives**

The Ad Hoc Group for Medical Research is a coalition of more than 300 patient and voluntary health groups, medical and scientific societies, academic and research organizations, and industry. We appreciate the opportunity to submit this statement in support of enhancing the federal investment in biomedical, behavioral, and population-based research conducted and supported by the National Institutes of Health (NIH).

We are deeply grateful to the Subcommittee for its long-standing and bipartisan leadership in support of NIH. These are difficult times for our nation and for people all around the globe, but we believe that science and innovation are essential if we are to continue to improve our nation's health, sustain our leadership in medical research, and remain competitive in today's global information and innovation-based economy. Given the uncertainty surrounding the final FY 2013 appropriations and the President's FY 2014 budget request, we expect this statement to be only the beginning of an ongoing conversation between the Subcommittee and research stakeholders on the FY 2014 funding needs of NIH. At this time, the Ad Hoc Group recommends the highest possible funding level for NIH, and encourages the Subcommittee to stop the pernicious cuts to research funding that squander invaluable scientific opportunities, threaten medical progress and continued improvements in our nation's health, and jeopardize our economic vitality.

NIH: A Public-Private Partnership to Save Lives and Provide Hope

The partnership between NIH and America's scientists, medical schools, teaching hospitals, universities, and research institutions is a unique and highly-productive relationship, leveraging the full strength of our nation's research enterprise to foster discovery, improve our understanding of the underlying cause of disease, and

develop the next generation of medical advancements. Approximately 84 percent of the NIH's budget goes to more than 300,000 research positions at over 2,500 universities and research institutions located in every state.

The federal government has a unique role in supporting medical research. No other public, corporate or charitable entity is willing or able to provide the broad and sustained funding for the cutting edge research necessary to yield new innovations and technologies of the future.

Research funded by NIH has contributed to nearly every medical treatment, diagnostic tool, and medical device developed in modern history, and we are all enjoying longer, healthier lives thanks to the federal government's wise investment in this lifesaving agency. From the major advances – including a nearly 70 percent reduction in the death rate for coronary heart disease and stroke – to moving stories of personalized medicine – such as children with rare diseases like dopa-responsive dystonia, whose prognosis has been transformed from severely disabled to happy and healthy through genomic medicine – NIH's role in improving human health has been extraordinary. NIH research impacts the full spectrum of the human experience, resulting in a 40 percent decline in infant mortality over the past 20 years, as well as a 30 percent decrease in chronic disability among seniors. For patients and their families, NIH is the “National Institutes of Hope.”

NIH is the world's premiere supporter of merit-reviewed, investigator-initiated basic research. This fundamental understanding of how disease works and insight into the cellular, molecular, and genetic processes underlying life itself, including the impact of social environment on these processes, underpin our ability to conquer devastating illnesses. The application of the results of basic research to the detection, diagnosis, treatment, and prevention of disease is the ultimate goal of medical research. Ensuring a steady pipeline of basic research discoveries while also supporting the translational efforts absolutely necessary to bring the promise of this knowledge to fruition requires a sustained investment in NIH.

The research supported by NIH drives not only medical progress but also local and national economic activity, creating skilled, high-paying jobs and fostering new products and industries. According to a report released by

United for Medical Research, a coalition of scientific advocates, institutions and industries, in fiscal year 2011, NIH-funded research supported an estimated 432,000 jobs all across the United States, enabled 13 states to experience job growth of more than 10,000 jobs, and generated more than \$62 billion in new economic activity. Another report, produced by Tripp Umbach, calculated a \$2.60 return on investment for every dollar spent on research at American medical schools and teaching hospitals.

Sequestration Threatens Scientific Momentum

As patients, health care providers, and scientists we are deeply disturbed about the impact the 5 percent cut in NIH funding under sequestration in the current fiscal year will have on our ability to sustain the scientific momentum that has contributed so greatly to our nation's health and our economic vitality. But sequestration represents only the latest threat to the viability of this nation's medical research enterprise, following a decade when NIH has lost nearly one-fifth of its budget after inflation.

The leadership and staff at NIH and its Institutes and Centers has engaged patient groups, scientific societies, and research institutions to identify emerging research opportunities and urgent health needs, and has worked resolutely to prioritize precious federal dollars to those areas demonstrating the greatest promise. But a continued erosion of our national commitment to medical research threatens our ability to support a medical research enterprise that is capable of taking full advantage of existing and emerging scientific opportunities.

Perhaps one of the greatest concerns is the obstacle these continued cuts will present to the next generation of scientists, who will see training funds slashed and the possibility of sustaining a career in research diminished. NIH also plays a significant role in supporting the next generation of innovators, the young and talented scientists and physicians who will be responsible for the breakthroughs of tomorrow.

Appearing before this Subcommittee on March 5, NIH Director Francis Collins, M.D., Ph.D., said, "That's our seed corn. It has been the strength of America... the biomedical research community, their

creativity, their innovative instincts, and we're putting that at serious risk as we see this kind of downturn in the support for research.”

The challenges of maintaining a cadre of physician-scientists to facilitate translation of basic research to human medicine, ensuring a biomedical workforce that reflects the racial and gender diversity of our citizenry, and maximizing our nation’s human capital to solve our most pressing health problems will only be addressed through continued support of NIH.

NIH is Critical to U.S. Competitiveness

Our country still has the most robust medical research capacity in the world, but that capacity simply cannot weather repeated blows such as persistent below-inflation funding levels and cuts of sequestration, which jeopardize our competitive edge in an increasingly innovation-based global marketplace. As Dr. Collins told this Subcommittee, other nations are “ramping up their support of biomedical research because they've read our playbook.” A 2012 report from the Information Technology and Innovation Foundation stated, “China, for example, has identified biotechnology as one of seven key strategic and emerging (SEI) pillar industries and has pledged to invest \$308.5 billion in biotechnology over the next five years. This means that, if current trends in biomedical research investment continue, the U.S. government’s investment in life sciences research over the ensuing half-decade is likely to be barely half that of China’s in current dollars, and roughly one-quarter of China’s level as a share of GDP.... Other countries are also investing more in biomedical research relative to the sizes of their economies. When it comes to government funding for pharmaceutical industry-performed research, Korea’s government provides seven times more funding as a share of GDP than does the United States, while Singapore and Taiwan provide five and three times as much, respectively.”

Talented medical researchers from all over the world, who once flocked to the U.S. for training and stayed to contribute to our innovation-driven economy, are now returning to better opportunities in their home countries. We cannot afford to lose that intellectual capacity, much less the jobs and industries fueled by medical research. The U.S. has been the global leader in medical research because of Congress's bipartisan recognition of NIH's critical role. To maintain our dominance, we must reaffirm this commitment to provide NIH the funds needed to maintain our competitive edge.

NIH: An Answer to Challenging Times

The Ad Hoc Group's members recognize the tremendous challenges facing our nation's economy and acknowledge the difficult decisions that must be made to restore our country's fiscal health. Nevertheless, we believe strongly that NIH is an essential part of the solution to the nation's economic restoration. Strengthening our commitment to medical research, through robust funding of the NIH, is a critical element in ensuring the health and well-being of the American people and our economy.

Therefore, the Ad Hoc Group for Medical Research respectfully requests that NIH be recognized as an urgent national priority as the Subcommittee prepares the FY 2014 appropriations bill.