

May 12, 2015

The Honorable Fred Upton
Chairman
Committee on Energy & Commerce
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Frank Pallone
Ranking Member
Committee on Energy & Commerce
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Joe Pitts
Chairman
Committee on Energy & Commerce
Subcommittee on Health
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Gene Green
Ranking Member
Committee on Energy & Commerce
Subcommittee on Health
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Diana DeGette
Ranking Member
Committee on Energy & Commerce
Subcommittee on Oversight & Investigation
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairmen Upton and Pitts and Ranking Members Pallone, Green, and DeGette,

As a community committed to medical progress, we commend you for including a \$10 billion Innovation Fund for research supported by the National Institutes of Health (NIH) in the second discussion draft of the 21st Century Cures Act.

Our values as a nation do not permit complacency in the face of threats to American health and safety. Yet, we appear resigned to walking – rather than running – toward previously unimagined solutions for diseases and disabilities that rob Americans of time, independence, and hope. The undersigned organizations applaud your efforts to ensure that we as a nation recalibrate, in part by boosting NIH funding.

In 2014, the success rate for new NIH grants was less than 16 percent. When only 1 in 6 proposals receive funding, the consequences extend beyond slower medical progress today. Rates like this discourage young people from entering the medical research field, jeopardizing progress going forward. Peer nations – China and other Asian nations in particular – are ramping up their R&D spending, as our Nation pulls back on ours.

The deliberative process you have undertaken to arrive at the Innovation Fund has helped clarify the issue: We are sustaining our research enterprise with 20th century resources in the face of 21st century opportunities and challenges. As a result, extraordinarily promising leads against both prevalent and rare diseases and disabilities are languishing. This is a human tragedy and a fiscal mistake; we must stop these health threats, not acquiesce to them.

The mandatory funding the Innovation Fund provides, coupled with meaningful year over year growth in the Institutes' baseline budget, will make a profoundly positive difference in the discovery landscape; pushing the boundaries of knowledge wider to reveal new targets for the development and delivery of

transformative drugs, biologics and medical devices. We urge you to continue to champion the NIH Innovation Fund as the 21st Century Cures Act moves through the legislative process and until it is signed into law.

Thank you again for your leadership, vision and determination to speed medical progress. It is a privilege to participate in this effort.

Sincerely,

Research!America
/list of groups/