



Coalition to Promote Research

Organizations Committed to Promoting Public Health, Innovation
and Fundamental Knowledge Through Scientific Research

July 26, 2011

The Honorable Dennis Rehberg
Chair
Subcommittee on Labor-HHS-Education
Appropriations Committee
United States House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Rosa DeLauro
Ranking Member
Subcommittee on Labor-HHS-Education
Appropriations Committee
United States House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairman Rehberg and Ranking Member DeLauro:

The undersigned organizations write to urge you to continue to support the competitive scientific merit review process and oppose any legislative language or restrictions that would eliminate funding for specific peer-reviewed research grants supported by the National Institutes of Health (NIH).

NIH is the premier biomedical and behavioral research institution in the world. Its mission is to support science to improve the health and well-being of all humanity.

As you know, the NIH uses a rigorous peer review process to determine which grant applications to fund. Thousands of scientists each year submit applications to the NIH requesting funding for their scientific proposals. Applications are evaluated initially by the NIH's Center for Scientific Review and peer review groups composed of scientific experts from around the U.S. and the world. These groups (also called "study sections") assess and rate the scientific and technical merit of the proposed research or training projects. Reviewers consider such factors as the public health relevance of the proposal, and how the project would increase scientific knowledge. Projects reviewed in a particular session are scored and ranked in relation to each other. The applications are then assigned to one of the 27 institutes and centers at NIH. A second level of peer review is conducted by the NIH National Advisory Councils of the respective funding Institutes or Centers, which are composed of both scientists from the research community and public representatives. These reviewers consider not only the quality of the proposals, but also how the initially-reviewed projects would fit within the Institute's or Center's priorities. These councils ensure that the NIH receives advice from a cross-section of the U.S. population in its deliberation and decision-making.

This [system](#) ensures that research conducted and supported with taxpayer dollars is scientifically meritorious and serves to improve the lives of all people. Moreover, approximately 80 percent of meritorious, scientifically valid proposals **do not** receive funding through this process. The grants that receive funding, however, are the best in their fields.

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NIH's research priorities are driven primarily by the science and by researchers in laboratories, hospitals and academic medical centers across the country who spend years studying biomedical and behavioral health issues. Even so, it is not the science alone that drives NIH priorities. Institute directors, NIH staff and Advisory Council members also consider the burden of specific diseases, the public health needs of society, existing scientific opportunities, the quality of individual research proposals, the experience of the applicant, and the ability to sustain research through adequate staffing and infrastructure.

Again, we urge your continued support for scientific integrity and the NIH peer review process during the upcoming debates on federal spending priorities. We are aware that we are operating in a challenging budget environment. Yet, Congressional decisions rescinding funding for individual grants that have been approved through NIH's process not only undermines the integrity of the world's premiere scientific enterprise, but also the work of our nation's top scientists, and ultimately, the public's health.

The Coalition to Promote Research (CPR) is a [coalition](#) of national organizations committed to promoting public health, innovation and fundamental knowledge through scientific research. Our organizations represent hundreds of thousands of scientists, physicians, health care providers, and patients who support federal investments in basic and applied biomedical and behavioral research. If you would like additional information, please contact CPR co-chairs Angela Sharpe, alsharpe@cossa.org or 202-842-3525 with the Consortium of Social Science Associations or Karen Studwell, with the American Psychological Association, kstudwell@apa.org or 202-336-5585.

Sincerely,

ADAPTE International
Ad Hoc Group for Medical Research
AIDS Action Baltimore
Alpha-1 Association
Alpha-1 Foundation
American Academy of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry
American Anthropological Association
American Association of Colleges of Nursing
American Association for Dental Research
American Association of University Professors
American College of Rheumatology
American College of Sports Medicine
American Lung Association
American Educational Research Association

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American Heart Association

American Lung Association

American Psychiatric Association

American Psychological Association

American Society of Addiction Medicine

American Society for Nutrition

American Society for Pharmacology & Experimental Therapeutics

American Society of Hematology

American Sociological Association

American Statistical Association

amfAR, The Foundation for AIDS Research

Anxiety Disorders Association of America

Association of Academic Health Sciences Libraries

Association of American Medical Colleges

Association of American Universities

Association of Independent Research Institutes

Association for Psychological Science

Association for Research in Otolaryngology (ARO)

Association for Research in Vision & Ophthalmology

Association of Population Centers

AVAC: Global Advocacy for HIV Prevention

California Association of Alcohol and Drug Abuse Counselors (CAADAC)

Coalition for the Advancement of Health Through Behavioral and Social Sciences Research

Coalition for the Life Sciences

College on Problems of Drug Dependence

Columbia University

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Consortium of Social Science Associations
COPD Foundation
FATE- Fighting Addiction Through Education
Federation of American Societies for Experimental Biology
Federation of Associations in Behavioral and Brain Sciences
Friends of the National Institute on Aging
Friends of the National Institute on Drug Abuse
Hepatitis Foundation International
HIV Medicine Association
Indiana University
International Certification and Reciprocity Consortium (IC&RC)
Mental Health America
Medical Library Association
Michigan State University
National Alliance for Eye and Vision Research (NAEVR)
National Families in Action
National Primate Research Centers
National Women's Health Network
New York University
Northeastern University
Population Association of America
Racial and Ethnic Health Disparities Coalition
Reproductive Health Technologies Project
Research!America
Research Society on Alcoholism
Society for Industrial and Applied Mathematics
Society for Prevention Research

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Society for Research in Child Development

Society for Research on Adolescence

Stanford University

The AIDS Institute

The American Association for the Study of Liver Diseases

The Endocrine Society

The National Center on Addiction and Substance Abuse at Columbia University

The Public Health Institute

The Society for the Psychological Study of Social Issues

The Society for Women's Health Research

The University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill

Treatment Communities of America

University of Illinois

University of Cincinnati

University of Virginia

University of Wisconsin-Madison

Washington University in Saint Louis

Yale University