



## Friends of NICHD

*Supporting the Eunice Kennedy Shriver*

National Institute of Child Health and Human Development

May 10, 2016

The Honorable Roy Blunt  
Chair  
Subcommittee on Labor, Health and Human  
Services, Education, and Related Agencies  
Senate Committee on Appropriations  
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Tom Cole  
Chair  
Subcommittee on Labor, Health and Human  
Services, Education, and Related Agencies  
House Committee on Appropriations  
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Patty Murray  
Ranking Member  
Subcommittee on Labor, Health and Human  
Services, Education, and Related Agencies  
Senate Committee on Appropriations  
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Rosa DeLauro  
Ranking Member  
Subcommittee on Labor, Health and Human  
Services, Education, and Related Agencies  
House Committee on Appropriations  
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairmen Blunt and Cole and Ranking Members Murray and DeLauro:

The undersigned organizations, members of the Friends of the *Eunice Kennedy Shriver* National Institute of Child Health and Human Development (NICHD), urge you to include at least \$34.5 billion for the National Institutes of Health (NIH) and at least \$1.441 billion for NICHD in the fiscal year (FY) 2017 Labor, Health and Human Services, Education and Related Agencies (Labor-HHS) appropriations bill. The \$2.4 billion increase for NIH and \$100 million increase for NICHD represent 5 percent real growth above the projected rate of biomedical inflation.

The Friends of NICHD is a coalition of over 100 organizations representing scientists, physicians, health care providers, patients, and parents concerned with the health and welfare of women, children, and families, and people with disabilities. We are pleased to support the extraordinary work of NICHD.

Since its establishment in 1963, NICHD has achieved great success in meeting the objectives of its broad biomedical and behavioral research mission, which includes research on child development before and after birth; women's health throughout the life cycle; maternal, child, and family health; learning and language development; reproductive biology; population health; and medical rehabilitation. With sufficient resources, NICHD can build upon the promising initiatives it has undertaken over the last 50 years, produce new insights into human development, and develop solutions to health and developmental problems throughout the world, including those individuals and families in your districts.

NICHD is also now playing a crucial role in research related to the Zika virus. Linked to the development of congenital microcephaly, Zika virus poses a clear threat to mothers and children in the United States and beyond. NICHD is uniquely positioned to investigate the mechanisms that lead to microcephaly during pregnancy and to help uncover medical breakthroughs to mitigate the harmful effects of Zika virus. In fact, NICHD recently funded U.S.-based researchers to conduct a large study of pregnant women in Brazil from the first trimester of pregnancy. The study will track Zika infection in these women and follow children suspected of being affected by the virus for two years.

As you know, even during these challenging budgetary times, investing in biomedical and behavioral research makes good economic sense. Over 80 percent of the NIH annual budget is awarded to institutions and individual investigators in all 50 states, stimulating jobs, scientific innovation, and economic growth. The impact of this investment has been affirmed in a study supported by the Association of American Medical Colleges, which found that federally and state-funded research conducted at the nation's medical schools and teaching hospitals in 2009 added nearly \$45 billion to the nation's economy.

Supporting the NIH is also important from a humanitarian perspective. Millions of people worldwide suffer from life-threatening and debilitating diseases, disorders, and disabilities. NIH-supported research is the key to not only unlocking the mystery of these conditions but also to preventing them. In 2015 alone, NICHD-funded investigators have contributed to many cutting-edge scientific breakthroughs and advancements, including:

- Techniques to improve weight gain and growth of premature infants;
- The link between antibiotic use in children and weight gain;
- The positive health benefits of brief physical activity breaks for children;
- The need to improve screening women for pelvic pain;
- A new system for evaluating the health outcomes of spinal cord injuries;
- Using robotics to improve technologies to produce prosthetics limbs;
- Improving immunization efficacy in children with HIV;
- Increasing HIV screening in high-risk communities;
- Easing social anxiety in children with autism;
- Surgical treatments for prenatal spina bifida;
- A safe and effective drug to treat bipolar disorder in children;
- A drug to treat abdominal infections in infants less than three months of age;
- Better identification of various rare diseases affecting children;
- A new understanding of the risks affecting male fertility; and
- Helping disadvantaged children avoid "summer loss"—forgetting lessons during summer break.

These are only a few examples of recent NICHD-supported ground-breaking research findings. With sustained support in FY 2017, NICHD will be able to continue funding research and research training activities to fulfill its mission of improving the health and well-being of mothers, children, and families. We thank you for your longstanding support of the NIH and encourage you to make the NICHD a top priority as you begin work on the FY 2017 Labor-HHS appropriations bill. Should you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact James Baumberger, 2016 Chair of the Friends, at [jbaumberger@aap.org](mailto:jbaumberger@aap.org) or (202) 347-8600.

Sincerely,

Academic Pediatric Association  
Academy for Radiology Research  
American Academy of Pediatrics  
American Congress of Obstetricians and Gynecologists  
American Educational Research Association

American Pediatric Society  
American Psychological Association  
American Society for Reproductive Medicine  
American Society of Pediatric Nephrology  
American Sociological Association  
American Thoracic Society  
American Urogynecologic Society  
Association of American Veterinary Medical Colleges  
Association of Medical School Pediatric Department Chairs  
Association of Population Centers  
Association of University Centers on Disabilities  
Association of Women's Health, Obstetric and Neonatal Nurses  
Coalition for Imaging and Bioengineering Research  
Consortium of Social Science Associations  
Endocrine Society  
Federation of Associations in Behavioral and Brain Sciences  
FRAXA Research Foundation  
Global Alliance to Prevent Prematurity and Stillbirth, an initiative of Seattle Children's  
Human Animal Bond Research Initiative (HABRI) Foundation  
Jeffrey Modell Foundation  
March of Dimes  
National Association of Pediatric Nurse Practitioners  
National Center for Learning Disabilities  
National Council on Family Relations  
National PKU Alliance  
National Women's Health Network  
Nemours Children's Health System  
Pediatric Policy Council  
Population Association of America  
Preeclampsia Foundation  
PremieWorld, LLC  
RESOLVE: The National Infertility Association  
Society for Maternal-Fetal Medicine  
Society for Pediatric Research  
Society for Research in Child Development  
Society for Women's Health Research  
Spina Bifida Association