

United for Medical Research



November 14, 2013

UMR MEMBERS

American Association
for Cancer Research
American Cancer Society
Cancer Action Network
American Diabetes Association
American Heart Association
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Life Technologies
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Melanoma Research Alliance
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Partners HealthCare
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The Endocrine Society
Thermo Fisher Scientific
University of Pennsylvania
University of Southern
California
Vanderbilt University
Washington University
in St. Louis

The Honorable Paul Ryan
Chairman
Committee on the Budget
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Patty Murray
Chairman
Budget Committee
U.S. Senate
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Chairmen Ryan and Murray:

U.S. medical research provides a beacon of hope for Americans who suffer from diseases and is a major driver of economic growth. The United States has stood firmly at the forefront of the research revolution, with leadership built upon a solid federal commitment to robust and sustained investment in biomedical research through the National Institutes of Health (NIH). However, this American success story is being irreparably harmed by sequestration. We, therefore, urge you to eliminate sequestration as part of the Budget Conference agreement.

Public investment in research has laid the foundation for the development of many breakthroughs in drugs and therapies—from personalized gene therapies to synthetic skin to cures for certain types of cancer. And it has given rise to an American lead, globally competitive life sciences industry. This industry supports more than 7 million high-wage American jobs and contributes \$69 billion annually to U.S. gross domestic product.

But this leadership is under threat on two fronts. Federal investment in biomedical research through NIH has decreased, both in inflation-adjusted dollars and as a share of GDP, nearly every year since 2003. Simply put, the United States is not sustaining the historically strong investment in research that propelled us to global primacy. At the same time, global competition has intensified. China, Germany, India, Singapore, Sweden, the United Kingdom and others, recognize that life sciences represents a high-wage, high growth industry and actively seek to wrest life sciences leadership from the United States.

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Sequestration's devastating cuts in non-defense discretionary spending further jeopardize this leadership. These reductions were intended to decrease federal debt; however, in reality they are counter-productive, slowing economic growth while failing to address revenues and entitlement reform. The \$1.7 billion in sequester cuts have reduced the NIH's ability to support innovative research. At the current level, NIH can fund only one in six grants, resulting in unfunded lifesaving research and stifling the pipeline of young researchers who are left with little opportunity in the U.S. The cost of continuing this austerity will be nothing short of the complete abdication of U.S. leadership in medical research.

Though sequestration has only been upon us for eight months, it has already had a dilatory impact on research. According to a survey conducted by UMR member organizations, the Association of American Universities and the Association of Public and Land-grant Universities, sequestration has caused a reduction in federal research grants to academic institutions and has slowed campus-based research. The biggest effects are fewer student positions (31 percent), a reduction in temporary or part-time staff positions (30 percent), and a decline in postdoctoral fellows (24 percent). Some 22 percent of respondents said they also have had to reduce the number of permanent staff members.

The budget conference is a meaningful opportunity to reassert the U.S. position as the world leader in medical research. On behalf of the 28 members of [United for Medical Research](#) that represent leading research institutions, patient and health advocates and private industry, we urge you and your fellow conferees to reach an agreement that promotes economic growth and begins to close the nation's innovation deficit by eliminating sequestration and supporting medical research at the NIH.

Sincerely,

United for Medical Research