

# United for Medical Research



March 8, 2018

## UMR Members

AdvaMed  
Alzheimer's Association  
American Association for the Advancement of Science  
American Cancer Society  
Cancer Action Network  
American Heart Association  
Association of American Universities  
Association of Public and Land-grant Universities  
BD  
Biotechnology Industry Organization  
Boston University  
Corning  
FasterCures  
Harvard University  
John Hopkins University  
Johnson & Johnson  
Massachusetts Institute of Technology  
Northwestern University  
PhRMA  
Research!America  
Stanford University  
Thermo Fisher Scientific  
University of Pennsylvania  
Vanderbilt University  
Vanderbilt University Medical Center  
Washington University in St. Louis

Senator Thad Cochran  
Chair, Appropriations Committee  
United States Senate

Senator Patrick Leahy  
Vice Chair, Appropriations Committee  
United States Senate

Representative Rodney Frelinghuysen  
Chair, Appropriations Committee  
United States House of Representatives

Representative Nita Lowey  
Ranking Member, Appropriations Committee  
United States House of Representatives

Dear Chairmen Cochran and Frelinghuysen and Ranking Members Leahy and Lowey:

On behalf of United for Medical Research (UMR), which represents leading scientific research institutions and industries, and patient advocates, we thank you for your critical support of the National Institutes of Health (NIH) and urge you to stand firm in your support of the agency with at least a \$2 billion increase in the upcoming FY 2018 omnibus appropriations bill.

Your leadership has helped NIH begin to regain its footing after a decade of flat funding, which diminished the true promise and potential of America's biomedical research community.

A strong commitment to NIH funding pays off in remarkable ways. Take for example the NIH support that helped Dr. William H. Fissell IV (Vanderbilt University) and his colleague Dr. Shuvo Roy (University of California, San Francisco) develop the implantable artificial kidney, which would free kidney patients from dialysis and reduce the need for kidney transplants. Given that more than 460,000 Americans have end stage renal disease, Fissell and Roy's breakthrough research could improve the lives of countless Americans.

Also consider the amazing NIH-funded research that Dr. Li-Huei Tsai of MIT has been leading on Alzheimer's disease. Dr. Tsai and her team of researchers have discovered that LED lights, flickering at a specific frequency, substantially reduce the beta amyloid plaques seen in Alzheimer's disease, in the visual cortex of mice. If this finding bears out in humans, it is simply a game-changer.

Beyond the life-saving and life-changing research that NIH supports, the economic impact of a robust NIH budget is astounding.

Each year, Medicare spends in the range of \$35 billion for care related to end-stage renal failure — an amount greater than the entire NIH budget. And nearly one in every five Medicare dollars is spent on care related to Alzheimer’s disease or other forms of dementia. Alzheimer’s is the sixth-leading cause of death in the United States and the only cause of death among the top 10 that cannot yet be prevented, cured or even slowed. It also has been estimated that a one percent reduction in deaths from two other major health threats, cancer or heart disease, would be worth nearly \$500 billion to the U.S. economy.

Again, we are most grateful for your continued support of a strong NIH budget, and our coalition will continue our efforts to advocate on behalf of NIH with all members of Congress.

Sincerely,

Alex Currie  
Director of Federal Relations  
Vanderbilt University Medical Center  
President, United for Medical Research

Sue Nelson  
Vice President, Federal Advocacy  
American Heart Association  
Treasurer, United for Medical Research

Chol Pak  
Senior Manager, Federal Government Relations  
Thermo Fisher Scientific  
Secretary, United for Medical Research

Danny Ly  
Director, Public Policy & Government Relations  
BD (Becton, Dickinson and Company)  
Board Member, United for Medical Research

Beth Felder  
Director, Federal Affairs  
Johns Hopkins University  
Board Member, United for Medical Research