



FRIENDS OF NICHD COALITION

The Eunice Kennedy Shriver National Institute of Child Health and Human Development
National Institutes of Health

December 1, 2011

The Honorable Tom Harkin
Chair
Subcommittee on Labor, Health and Human
Services, Education, and Related Agencies
Senate Committee on Appropriations
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Denny Rehberg
Chair
Subcommittee on Labor, Health and Human
Services, Education, and Related Agencies
House Committee on Appropriations
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Richard Shelby
Ranking Member
Subcommittee on Labor, Health and Human
Services, Education, and Related Agencies
Senate Committee on Appropriations
Washington, D.C. 20510

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

Dear Chairmen Harkin and Rehberg and Ranking Members Shelby and DeLauro:

We represent the Friends of the Eunice Kennedy Shriver National Institute of Child Health and Human Development (NICHD), a coalition of over 100 organizations, representing scientists, physicians, health care providers, patients, and parents, supporting the NICHD mission. As you negotiate a final version of the Fiscal Year (FY) 2012 Labor, Health and Human Services, and Education appropriations bill, we urge you to make funding the National Institutes of Health (NIH), and NICHD in particular, a priority.

As you know, even during these challenging budgetary times, investing in medical 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 and scientific innovation. The impact of this investment was affirmed most recently in a study supported by the American Association of Medical Colleges, which found federal 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 and disabilities. NIH-supported research is the key to not only unlocking the mystery of these conditions, but also to preventing them. NICHD-funded investigators have contributed numerous scientific findings, including:

- finding a drug therapy that has reduced maternal transmission of HIV from 25 percent to 1.2 percent worldwide;
- supporting research and information dissemination activities that has led to an over 50 percent reduction in the U.S. rate of Sudden Infant Death Syndrome since 1994;

- identifying the role that progesterone, a naturally occurring hormone, plays in reducing the rate of preterm birth;
- supporting advances in respirator technologies and the availability of replacement lung surfactant, which has contributed to increased survival rates for respiratory distress syndrome going from 5 percent in the 1960s, to 95 percent today;
- utilizing a variety of medical technologies, such as functional magnetic resonance imaging technology and bone density, to characterize child development trends and distinguish normal and abnormal child development markers; and
- discovering how increased folate intake prevents certain birth defects.

These are only a few examples of NICHD-supported ground-breaking research findings. With sustained support in FY 2012, 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 NIH and encourage you to make the NICHD a top priority as you finalize an agreement on the FY 2012 Labor, Health and Human Services, and Education appropriations bill.

Sincerely,



Emil Wigode
Chair, Friends of NICHD



Karen Studwell, J.D.
Co-Chair, Friends of NICHD