April 12, 2013

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 Jack Kingston
Chair
Subcommittee on Labor, Health and Human Services, Education, and Related Agencies
House Committee on Appropriations
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Jerry Moran
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 Kingston and Ranking Members Moran and DeLauro:

The undersigned organizations, as members of the Friends of the Eunice Kennedy Shriver National Institute of Child Health and Human Development (NICHD) urge you to include at least $32 billion for the National Institutes of Health (NIH) and at least $1.37 billion for the Eunice Kennedy Shriver National Institute of Child Health and Human Development (NICHD) in the FY2014 Health and Human Services, and Education appropriations bill. We remain deeply concerned with the failure to avert the sequester that will cut $1.5 billion from NIH’s FY2013 discretionary funding, which come at a time when investment in long-term research is desperately needed. A funding level of at least $1.37 billion will allow the NICHD to build upon successful research while prioritizing and investing in new research based on their recently released Scientific Vision.

The Friends of NICHD is a coalition that includes over 100 organizations representing scientists, physicians, health care providers, patients and parents concerned with the health and welfare of women, children, families, and people with disabilities. We are pleased to support the extraordinary work of the 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 and population health; and medical rehabilitation. With sufficient resources, NICHD could build upon the promising initiatives it has undertaken over the last 50 years, and produce new insights into human development and solutions to health and developmental problems throughout the world, including families in your districts.

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 Association of American 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 FY2014, 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 begin work on the FY 2014 Labor, Health and Human Services, and Education appropriations bill. Should you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact Katie Schubert, 2013 Chair of the Friends, at kschubert@dc-crd.com or (202) 484-1100.

Sincerely,

Academic Pediatric Association
American Academy of Pediatrics
American Congress of Obstetrician-Gynecologists
American Pediatric Society
American Physical Therapy Association
American Psychiatric Association
American Psychological Association
American Society for Bone and Mineral Research
American Society for Reproductive Medicine
American Society of Pediatric Nephrology
American Thoracic Society
American Urogynecologic Society
Arthritis Foundation
Association of Maternal & Child Health Programs
Association of Medical School Pediatric Chairs
Association of Population Centers
Association of Women's Health, Obstetric and Neonatal Nurses
Federation of Associations in Behavioral & Brain Sciences.
First Candle/SIDS Alliance
Global Alliance to Prevent Prematurity and Stillbirth
International Rett Syndrome Foundation
Jeffrey Modell Foundation
March of Dimes
National Association of Nurse Practitioners in Women's Health
National Association of Pediatric Nurse Practitioners
National Center for Learning Disabilities
National Down Syndrome Society
National Women's Health Network
Nemours
Population Association of America
RESOLVE: The National Infertility Association
Society for Maternal-Fetal Medicine
Society for Pediatric Research
Society for Research in Child Development
Society for the Study of Reproduction
Society for Women's Health Research
Society of Toxicology
Society of Toxicology
Spina Bifida Association