

January 21, 2015

Francis Collins, MD, PhD  
Director  
National Institutes of Health  
9000 Rockville Pike  
Bethesda, MD 20892

Shaun Donovan  
Director  
Office of Management and Budget  
725 17th Street, NW  
Washington, DC 20503

Dear Dr. Collins and Director Donovan:

As organizations dedicated to improving the health of children, we write to urge the National Institutes of Health (NIH) and the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) to ensure that all funds associated with the recently-closed National Children's Study (NCS) be dedicated solely to undertakings consistent with NCS's goals and mission, as directed by Congress in the *Consolidated and Further Continuing Appropriations Act, 2015*.

Section 1004 of the *Children's Health Act of 2000* (Public Law 106-310) authorized the establishment of a national longitudinal study to evaluate a wide range of environmental influences on the health and development of a nationally representative sample of children. The vision of this study galvanized the maternal and child health research communities behind the possibility of transforming our understanding of child health and development. After years of effort and public investment, however, the National Children's Study (NCS) was unfortunately determined to be not feasible and was closed.

While it is deeply disappointing that a feasible plan for a national longitudinal study was never reached, the child health goals of the *Children's Health Act* remain as important today as 14 years ago. Given the scientific discoveries that have been made since 2000 (due in large part to research stimulated by the NCS vision), achieving these goals has become, if anything, even more important. We now understand that the effects of physical and social environments on health begin earlier and reach farther than we had ever imagined. We must work now with even greater commitment and urgency to better understand the precursors of child and adult disease in order to develop new treatment and prevention strategies that will improve the health of the entire population.

The *Consolidated and Further Continuing Appropriations Act, 2015* (Public Law 113-235) makes \$165 million available in fiscal year (FY) 2015 for the NCS "or research related to the Study's goals and mission." In light of the recent termination of the NCS, we urge you in the strongest terms to ensure that all such funds not expended on the closure of the NCS in FY 2015 remain within the NIH Office of the Director and be directed towards child health research fully consistent with the goals of Sec. 1004 of the *Children's Health Act of 2000*.

Moreover, the goals and mission of the NCS should continue to be advanced aggressively in future years. We further request that the Administration include at least \$165 million in the FY 2016 budget for coordinated child research efforts administered by the Office of the Director or other appropriate NIH institutes or offices and similarly consistent with the goals articulated in the *Children's Health Act*.

Thank you for your sustained support of child health research. If we may provide further information or assistance, please contact James Baumberger with the American Academy of Pediatrics at [jbaumberger@aap.org](mailto:jbaumberger@aap.org).

Sincerely,

Academic Pediatric Association  
American Academy of Pediatrics  
American Academy of Sleep Medicine

American Association of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry  
American Association for Clinical Chemistry  
American Heart Association  
American Pediatric Society  
American Psychiatric Association  
American Society for Bone and Mineral Research  
American Society of Pediatric Nephrology  
Association of Medical School Pediatric Department Chairs  
Association of Population Centers  
Association of Women's Health, Obstetric and Neonatal Nurses  
Children's Health Fund  
Children's Hospital Association  
Easter Seals  
Elizabeth Glaser Pediatric AIDS Foundation  
Family Voices  
First Focus  
FOD Family Support Group  
Global Alliance to Prevent Prematurity and Stillbirth, an initiative of Seattle Children's  
March of Dimes  
The National Center for Children's Vision and Eye Health at Prevent Blindness  
National Fragile X Foundation  
National Hispanic Medical Association  
National Organization for Rare Disorders  
National Rural Health Association  
National Urea Cycle Disorders Foundation  
Organic Acidemia Association  
Osteogenesis Imperfecta Foundation  
Parent of Kids with Infectious Diseases  
Population Association of America  
Society for Pediatric Research