

May 23, 2022

The Honorable Patty Murray
Chair
Subcommittee on Labor, Health and Human,
Education, and Related Agencies Services
Senate Committee on Appropriations
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Rosa DeLauro
Chair
Subcommittee on Labor, Health and Human,
Education, and Related Agencies Services
House Committee on Appropriations
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Roy Blunt
Ranking Member
Subcommittee on Labor, Health and Human,
Education, and Related Agencies Services
Senate Committee on Appropriations
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Tom Cole
Ranking Member
Subcommittee on Labor, Health and Human,
Education, and Related Agencies Services
House Committee on Appropriations
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairs Murray and DeLauro and Ranking Members Blunt and Cole:

The undersigned organizations are members of the Friends of NICHD, a coalition of professional societies and patient advocacy groups with a vested interest in promoting and sustaining the vital research activities of the *Eunice Kennedy Shriver* National Institute of Child Health and Human Development (NICHD).

The Friends of NICHD are grateful for the strong, bipartisan support your subcommittees have given the National Institutes of Health (NIH) and NICHD. Thanks to your leadership, NIH has received significant increases in funding in recent years. The Friends of NICHD urge you to continue your support of NIH and NICHD in Fiscal Year (FY) 2023. Our coalition has endorsed the Ad Hoc Group for Medical Research FY 2023 funding recommendation, which would provide the NIH with ***\$49 billion in funding, a \$3.5 billion increase over the agency's FY 2022 level with additional funding for 21st Century Cures Act initiatives.*** In light of our support for this funding increase at NIH, we also call for NICHD to receive a proportionate increase, bringing its funding to ***\$1.816 billion in Fiscal Year (FY) 2023, an increase of \$133 million over FY 2022.*** We further request that NICHD's base budget in FY 2023 grow at the same rate as the NIH's base budget overall in FY 2023 spending legislation.

NICHD has made extraordinary achievements in meeting the objectives of its biomedical, social, and behavioral research mission, including research on pregnancy; reproductive biology; women's health throughout the life cycle; maternal, child, and family health; learning and language development; population health; and medical rehabilitation. For instance, NICHD-funded researchers have recently:

- Developed a new imaging technique to track maternal blood flow to the placenta, which may help diagnose common pregnancy complications.
- Showed that infants of mothers in low-income households receiving monthly cash payments were more likely to show faster brain activity in a pattern associated with learning and development at later ages.
- Devised a procedure for amputations below the knee that allows for sensory feedback from a prosthetic limb to the nervous system, allowing the person to feel the device's position and

movement, with support from NICHD's National Center for Medical Rehabilitation Research (NCMRR).

These are just a few examples of the institute's essential work across a broad range of disciplines.

Further, the institute continues to play an important role answering crucial public health questions about the impact of COVID-19 on children, pregnant women, individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities, and others under the unique purview of NICHD. NICHD-supported research is making strides toward this end by:

- Establishing that COVID-19 vaccines do not reduce fertility and can confer immunity from pregnant women to their newborns.
- Investigating biomarkers in children with COVID-19 to identify those at high risk for developing multi-system inflammatory syndrome (MIS-C), a rare but serious complication associated with COVID-19, through the PreVAIL kids project supported by the NIH Rapid Acceleration of Diagnostics (RADx) program.
- Developing, evaluating, and implementing strategies for keeping children and staff safely in schools, including work to understand mitigation measures to reduce COVID-19 transmission in schools for children with intellectual and developmental disabilities.
- Identifying insights to help improve uptake in COVID-19 vaccine campaigns.
- Studying "long COVID" in children and pregnant women.

This work is essential to the country's ongoing efforts to end the COVID-19 pandemic.

In addition to the institute's important contributions to our understanding of human health and development, NICHD plays a unique leadership role within the NIH by advocating for the inclusion of its populations in research funded across the agency and by acting as a convener and collaborator. The trans-NIH Pediatric Research Consortium (N-PerC), established in 2018 to better coordinate pediatric research activities across multiple institutes and centers, illustrates this work. The forum has fostered effective collaboration NIH-wide to drive the pediatric research agenda, identify synergies in child health-focused research being conducted in other institutes, and combine resources to fund important cross-cutting studies. NICHD was able to leverage N-PerC from the earliest days of the COVID-19 pandemic to quickly identify and fund pediatric research needs. NICHD has also demonstrated a commitment to advancing research specific to pregnant and lactating women. This commitment is highlighted by the institute's work on the Task Force on Research Specific to Pregnant Women and Lactating Women (PRGLAC), which developed recommendations to promote the development of safe and effective therapies for pregnant and lactating women and support greater inclusion of this population in clinical trials.

With increased support in FY 2023, NICHD will be able to continue funding research and training activities to advance its mission, confront the COVID-19 pandemic, and help unlock the next generation of cures for populations under its purview. As you consider NICHD's funding level in FY 2023, we request that you ensure the institute's funding level keep pace with the rate of growth at the NIH overall. While we strongly support continued investments in NIH's base funding, investments in NIH have not been shared evenly across the agency in recent years, creating a disparity in resources that threatens to stall continued progress in NICHD's work.

We thank you for your longstanding support of the NIH and encourage you to make NICHD a top priority by supporting the funding level of \$1.816 billion as you work on the FY 2023 Labor-HHS appropriations bill.

Sincerely,

Academic Pediatric Association
Alliance for Black NICU Families
American Academy of Pediatrics
American Association of Veterinary Medical Colleges
American College of Nurse-Midwives
American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists
American Educational Research Association
American Orthotic and Prosthetic Association
American Pediatric Society
American Psychological Association
American Society for Reproductive Medicine
American Society of Pediatric Nephrology
American Urogynecologic Society
American Urological Association
Association of Academic Physiatrists
Association of Medical School Pediatric Department Chairs
Association of Population Centers
Association of University Centers on Disabilities
Children's Hospital Association
Consortium of Social Science Associations
Cure HHT
Elizabeth Glaser Pediatric AIDS Foundation
Endocrine Society
Endometriosis Association
Federation of Associations in Behavioral and Brain Sciences
Foundation for Prader-Willi Research
GLO Premies
Global Down Syndrome Foundation
Human Animal Bond Research Institute (HABRI)
March of Dimes
MLD Foundation
National Association of Pediatric Nurse Practitioners
National Council on Family Relations
National Fragile X Foundation
National League for Nursing
National Urea Cycle Disorders Foundation
NBIA Disorders Association
Necrotizing Enterocolitis (NEC) Society
Nemours Children's Health

Osteogenesis Imperfecta Foundation
Pediatric Policy Council
Population Association of America
Preeclampsia Foundation
PremieWorld, LLC
PUSH for Empowered Pregnancy
Safe Kids Worldwide
Society for Birth Defects Research and Prevention
Society for Maternal-Fetal Medicine
Society for Pediatric Research
Society for Reproductive Investigation
Society for Research in Child Development
Society for Women's Health Research
Society of Toxicology (SOT)
Spina Bifida Association
Star Legacy Foundation
The Fibroid Foundation