



ENOUGH IS ENOUGH, NO MORE CUTS TO MEDICAL RESEARCH

News Action Letter #3

A recent article by conservative columnist David Brooks in the New York Times calls into question the value of medical research and specifically, its contributions to treating cancer. Those of us in the health research community know that tremendous progress has been made in the fight against cancer, so we must remind journalists as well as policymakers that cancer research saves lives every day and will continue to make a difference in the years to come. The same can be said for so many other diseases and disabilities, including depression - a debilitating disease that causes untoward suffering.

This week, we are sending some new messaging points that we hope you find useful in your advocacy efforts.

Medical Research has already made a profound difference in the war on cancer. We must continue fighting until we win.

- A child born today with lymphoblastic leukemia has a better than 80% chance of being cured. A child of the 1960s with the same disease had less than a 10% chance of a cure. The reason: medical research.
- Human Papillomavirus (HPV) vaccinations have proven highly effective at preventing cervical cancer, as HPV is responsible for about 50% of the cases. In a high-profile study funded by the National Cancer Institute, researchers found that vaccinated women were cancer free, paving the way for the protection of millions from a deadly form of cancer.ⁱ
- Gleevec, a drug for chronic myeloid leukemia, has proven highly effective. Its development was supported both by the National Cancer Institute and private sector researchers. In initial clinical trials, approximately half of the patients taking the drug were cancer-free after long-term treatment.ⁱⁱ
- National Cancer Institute-funded research discoveries lead to new drugs that give patients longer, more productive lives, for example Herceptin, a drug that decreases the risk of death from breast cancer by 33% in conjunction with chemotherapy.ⁱⁱⁱ

Depression is a disabling, deadly condition that is alarmingly prevalent in the U.S. and worldwide. Researchers are making amazing progress against this health threat – for the sake of our own and future generations, we must continue to support their efforts.

- Depression is a major cause of suicide, which is the third leading cause of death for Americans between the ages of 15 and 24. Medical research funded by the NIH has led to medications that are effective for 60-80% of those affected by depression, allowing patients to live healthier and happier lives.
- NIH-funded researchers identified the link between depression and serotonin. This fundamental discovery led to the development of a new class of drugs known as SSRI's, which are more effective and less costly than previous drugs on the market.^{iv}

TAKE ACTION NOW

Below, we've provided a script you can use when calling your members of Congress. Phone calls are an effective way to connect with your representatives and can have greater impact than emails or other forms of electronic communication.

The script below is just a template. Providing in-district or state examples of the impact of NIH funding will strengthen your argument and demonstrate just how important this issue is to you. It can also be tailored for use in advocating for other key health agencies. Please don't hesitate to call or email Ellie Dehoney at (571) 482-2717 or edehoney@researchamerica.org if you would like assistance in tailoring this script.

Phone Script

- Hello, my name is _____ and I'm calling from _____ in your district.
- I am calling because I'm very concerned about the current debate over federal spending for programs that are important to me and all Americans
- The National Institutes of Health (NIH) play an essential role in discovering life saving cures and treatments while enhancing our nation's economic competitiveness
- Unfortunately, these difficult fiscal times have resulted in over \$300 million in cuts to the NIH budget, and obtaining funding for medical research is harder than it has ever been
- As your constituent, I urge you to support legislation that provides robust NIH funding and I urge you to convey this message to your colleagues in Congress
- NIH research is crucial to improving the health of all Americans and creates the high quality jobs that our nation needs today
- Thank you for speaking with me and I look forward to hearing more from your office on this key issue

Petition Template

In addition to corresponding with Congress, petitions are an effective way to mobilize supporters of health research. Petitions can be distributed at the national, state, or district level using a variety of websites, including www.petitiononline.com and www.surveymonkey.com. Below, is sample text that could be used when building support for your survey.

Sign-On to Support Medical Research

The National Institutes of Health (NIH) fund breakthrough medical research at universities, hospitals, companies, and independent research institutes across the country. NIH funding is the foundation for the development of new treatments, cures and preventions developed by the private sector. NIH funding is vital for creating good jobs in our communities and across the nation. However, the NIH and other federal agencies that support medical research have been subject to multi-million dollar budget cuts and are now facing even deeper cuts.

Please, sign this petition and tell your Members of Congress: **“Enough is enough. I do not support cuts to the National Institutes of Health, the FDA, the CDC and other health agencies, and neither should you.”**

ⁱ <http://www.cancer.gov/cancertopics/factsheet/prevention/HPV-vaccine>

ⁱⁱ <http://www.cancer.gov/newscenter/qa/2001/gleevecqa>

ⁱⁱⁱ <http://www.cancer.gov/newscenter/pressreleases/2005/herceptincombination2005>

^{iv} <http://www.researchamerica.org/uploads/factsheet7depression.pdf>