

## Fact Sheet About NIH

Medical research is the beginning of hope for everyone suffering from serious illnesses like cancer, diabetes, Alzheimer's, depression, and Parkinson's. But to fully realize this hope, we must increase federal support for medical research funded by the National Institutes of Health. Increased support for NIH today will pay a lifetime of dividends in better health and quality of life for all Americans.

### What does NIH do?

The National Institutes of Health (NIH) is the principal federal funder of medical research. Researchers at medical schools, teaching hospitals, universities, and other organizations compete for much of this federal funding, which is awarded in the form of grants, cooperative agreements, or research contracts. More than 83% of the NIH's funding is awarded through almost 50,000 competitive grants to more than 325,000 researchers at over 3,000 universities, medical schools, and other research institutions in every state and around the world. More than 40,000 funding applications are submitted to the NIH each year. A national pool of research scientists helps the NIH select which applications will be approved for funding.

The NIH also supports nearly 6,000 scientists in its own laboratories, most of which are on the NIH campus in Bethesda, Maryland.

### What does NIH-funded research accomplish?

Our nation's investment in the NIH has pioneered many of the advances that help all Americans live longer and healthier lives. Just consider:

- Once, four out of five children with leukemia died. Today, thanks in large part to NIH-funded research, four out of five survive.
- Over the past 30 years, NIH-funded research has led to a 50 percent decline in deaths from heart disease and a 60 percent decrease in deaths from stroke.
- NIH-funded research has led to a vaccine that can protect women against cervical cancer — a deadly cancer that kills nearly 4,000 women each year.
- Rotavirus, a disease that kills 600,000 children a year worldwide, is now being stopped with two safe and effective vaccines, developed with the support of NIH-funded research.
- NIH-funded research helped create a vaccine for pneumonia, meningitis and acute ear infections — diseases that once killed up to one million children worldwide every year.

- NIH funding also supports communities' economic health by creating skilled jobs and new products that lead to long-term economic growth.
- NIH research has helped Americans live longer and healthier lives. Today, the average American lives six years longer than in the 1970s.

## How is the NIH funded?

The NIH budget is established through the annual Congressional appropriations process. During the past five years, the NIH budget declined by more than 11 percent after inflation. While the economic recovery package provides \$10.4 billion over the next two years, these funds provide only temporary support.

The ResearchMeansHope.org campaign seeks sustained, real growth in the NIH budget over the long term. The “boom and bust” cycles of support for medical research of the past are delaying hope for patients and their families and losing opportunities for science. There is a backlog of scientifically approved grants at the NIH waiting for funding. These are projects that will produce a deeper understanding of the molecular basis of disease and disability, as well as earlier and more efficient diagnostics, new and more effective treatments, and possibly even cures, for cancer, diabetes, Alzheimer’s disease, and autism, among others.

People across the country need to let their members of Congress know that they support significant, annual increases in medical research funding.

## About ResearchMeansHope.org

We are a coalition of concerned patients and the physicians and researchers of America's medical schools, teaching hospitals, universities, research companies and organizations. Our goal is to ensure that the promises of medical research are realized through sustained, real growth in federal support for medical research funded by the National Institutes of Health.