Maintaining Funding for Medical Research

Reductions in funding for the National Institutes of Health threaten jobs and our nation’s status as a leader in medical innovation. Reductions in funding also delay life-saving research. Restricted research funding impedes the progress toward improved diagnostics, better prevention strategies, and new treatments for arthritis, rheumatic diseases and other chronic conditions. This research is especially critical at a time when the number of people in the United States with arthritis and rheumatic diseases is steadily rising.

Facts

- The number of people with arthritis and related diseases is projected to be 67 million by 2030, a 34% increase. According to the CDC, more than 50 million people in United States currently live with arthritis and related diseases. Investment in medical research now is imperative to the discovery of a cure and the development of new treatments for these Americans.
- Finding new therapies and treatment options allows people the opportunity to remain in the workforce, continue to serve as productive citizens, and avoid disability.
- NIH awards and grants alone support over 360,000 jobs across the country. According to the NIH, more than 83 percent of NIH funding is spent in communities across the nation, creating jobs at more than 3,000 universities, medical schools, teaching hospitals, and other research institutions in every state.
- In 2011, NIH awarded $23.7 billion, which supports 360,485 jobs nationally.
- Cuts in health research funding will damage our already unsteady economy through losses in skilled, high-paying jobs; new products and industries; and improved technologies.

Solution

The American College of Rheumatology urges members of Congress to provide sustainable increases in funding levels for medical research. We are asking members of Congress to:

- Support sustainable increases in the NIH budget, with at least $32 billion in funding for FY 2013, recognizing that the demonstrated capacity of the agency is $35 billion.
- Fund medical research associated with the Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality and the Veterans Administration at optimal levels.
- Fund research at levels that allow for continued emphasis on patient-based research and clinical innovations in patient care.
- Maintain funding for the National Arthritis Action Plan and other rheumatologic related activities of the CDC.