



FELLOWS OF THE AACR ACADEMY

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February 23, 2026

The Honorable Susan Collins
Chair
Committee on Appropriations
United States Senate
Washington, District of Columbia 20510

The Honorable Patty Murray
Vice Chair
Committee on Appropriations
United States Senate
Washington, District of Columbia 20510

The Honorable Shelley Moore Capito
Chair
Labor-HHS Appropriations Subcommittee
United States Senate
Washington, District of Columbia 20510

The Honorable Tammy Baldwin
Ranking Member
Labor-HHS Appropriations Subcommittee
United States Senate
Washington, District of Columbia 20510

The Honorable Tom Cole
Chair
Committee on Appropriations
United States House of Representatives
Washington, District of Columbia 20515

The Honorable Rosa DeLauro
Ranking Member
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United States House of Representatives
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The Honorable Robert Aderholt
Chair
Labor-HHS Appropriations Subcommittee
United States House of Representatives
Washington, District of Columbia 20515

Dear Appropriations Chair Collins, Vice Chair Murray, Appropriations Chair Cole, Ranking Member DeLauro, Labor-HHS Subcommittee Chair Capito, Ranking Member Baldwin, and Labor-HHS Subcommittee Chair Aderholt,

On behalf of the American Association for Cancer Research (AACR), the world's first and largest scientific organization dedicated to advancing the prevention and treatment of all cancers, we join our colleagues who are the Fellows of the AACR Academy, a distinguished group of AACR Past Presidents, Nobel Laureates, and more than 175 preeminent U.S. leaders in the cancer research field, to express sincere and heartfelt appreciation for your extraordinary efforts to finalize the fiscal year (FY) 2026 Labor, Health and Human Services, Education, and Related Agencies (Labor-HHS) appropriations process.

Most specifically, we cannot thank you enough for continuing to prioritize funding for medical research and cancer science, while also protecting NIH's research infrastructure and restricting the number of multi-year-funded research grants that NIH is able to support in FY2026. Your agreement provides \$48.716 billion for the National Institutes of Health (NIH), including \$7.352 billion for the National Cancer Institute (NCI), reflecting continued bipartisan recognition of the value of medical research and the progress that it delivers for patients and their families.



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The Fellows of the AACR Academy represent decades of leadership in cancer research, improved patient care, and scientific training of the cancer workforce. Collectively, this distinguished group has helped drive many of the discoveries that underpin today's advances in cancer prevention, diagnosis, and treatment, while mentoring generations of researchers and clinical investigators who sustain the nation's biomedical research enterprise.

The impact of your longstanding commitment to ensuring robust annual funding increases for NIH can be clearly seen through the progress that has been made against cancer over the past several decades. Today, more than 18 million Americans are cancer survivors, and the five-year survival rate across all cancers has risen from roughly 50 percent in the early 1970s to approximately 70 percent today. Overall cancer mortality has declined by 34 percent since 1991, reflecting advances in cancer prevention, early detection, and more effective treatments made possible through sustained federal investments. For patients facing a cancer diagnosis and their families, these breakthroughs bring longer survival, improvements in quality of life, and efficacious treatment options.

Cancer research offers one of the best illustrations of how congressional support translates into real-world clinical benefit for patients. Nearly every cancer therapy approved in the past decade has origins in NIH-funded science, much of it supported through the NCI. These outcomes underscore the enormous value of a research system that is driving medical breakthroughs, bolstering the U.S. economy, and improving quality of life, and they demonstrate what Congress has made possible through decades of consistent leadership and commitment to research.

Today's scientific opportunities are unprecedented. Advances in genomics, new technologies, immunotherapy, data science, and precision medicine are reshaping how diseases are prevented, detected, and treated, improving outcomes across a broad range of diseases, and reinforcing the longstanding leadership of the United States in biomedical innovation. However, and as you are aware, fully delivering on the promise of today's science requires not only robust and sustained funding, but also a research environment that supports a broad, competitive NIH portfolio that prioritizes early-career investigators who are striving to establish independent research careers.

We are also extremely appreciative of your work to maintain the protections for indirect cost reimbursement, and to place limits on the Administration's expanding use of multi-year funding mechanisms, especially since this is resulting in a significant reduction of new research grants that can be supported each fiscal year. In FY2025, this approach resulted in thousands of fewer NIH grants being awarded, including hundreds of fewer cancer research awards at NCI, despite their strong scientific demand and potential for patient benefit.

Without providing an initial robust source of research funding upfront, the Administration's plan to transition to supporting NIH researchers by awarding multi-year-funded research grants is resulting in a significant decline in the number of new projects and ideas that are being supported by NIH, as well as a substantial overall reduction in the number of investigators who are receiving research funding. Medical progress depends on a steady influx of new ideas and investigators, but this policy that the Administration is pursuing is narrowing the range of scientific questions that can be pursued, slowing the pace of discovery, and delaying the development of new treatments that patients urgently need. Therefore, we



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commend the actions that you have taken during the FY2026 Labor-HHS appropriations process to place appropriate limits on this policy, as the consequences are especially acute for early-career investigators who are working to establish independent research programs and who represent the future of the biomedical research workforce.

We are tremendously grateful for your steadfast, bipartisan support for U.S. innovation and medical research through the funding increases for NIH and NCI that you worked so hard to secure in the FY2026 Labor-HHS final agreement. By pairing these investments with grantmaking policies that promote stability, opportunity, and accountability, Congress will be able to protect the progress already achieved against cancer and accelerate the discoveries that will benefit patients and their families in the years to come.

Thank you for your consistent leadership and for your extraordinary commitment to advancing cancer research for the benefit of patients with cancer and their families across the nation.

Respectfully,

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