August 21, 2015

The Honorable Tom Cole
Chair
Subcommittee on Labor, Health and Human Services, Education, and Related Agencies
Committee on Appropriations
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Roy Blunt
Chair
Subcommittee on Labor, Health and Human Services, Education, and Related Agencies
Committee on Appropriations
U.S. Senate
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Rosa DeLauro
Ranking Member
Subcommittee on Labor, Health and Human Services, Education, and Related Agencies
Committee on Appropriations
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Patty Murray
Ranking Member
Subcommittee on Labor, Health and Human Services, Education, and Related Agencies
Committee on Appropriations
U.S. Senate
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Chairman Cole, Ranking Member DeLauro, Chairman Blunt, and Ranking Member Murray:

Thank you for your continued support of the National Institutes of Health (NIH), which has resulted in immense benefits for the health of the American people. We are grateful that both the House and Senate Appropriations Committees have proposed a funding increase for the NIH in the Fiscal Year 2016 Labor, Health and Human Services, and Education, and Related Agencies Appropriations bills. Additionally, we want to raise to your attention a significant concern the 175 undersigned organizations and institutions have with the House committee's proposal to reduce the salary limit imposed on extramural researchers funded by the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) to Level III of the Executive pay scale.

Section 203 of the FY 2016 Labor-HHS appropriations bill passed by the House Appropriations Committee on June 24 would reduce the salary limit from Executive Level II to Executive Level III ($168,700 in 2015), a cut of $14,600 (8 percent). This cut, which follows a $20,000 (10 percent) cut in the FY 2012 funding bill, comes at a time when research institutions' discretionary funds from clinical revenues and other sources are increasingly constrained and less available to invest in research. As institutions and departments draw further from internal funds to compensate for the reduction in the salary limit, they will have less funding for critical activities such as providing bridge funding to investigators between grants and supporting seed grants and start-up packages for young investigators. In 2013, a recently published study found that for each dollar of external research support medical schools receive they invest an additional $0.53.

Lowering the extramural salary limit particularly disadvantages the most productive investigators who have a sustained track record in breakthrough discoveries, and will have a chilling effect on research institutions' ability to recruit and retain the most gifted new investigators. Moreover, cutting the salary limit disproportionately affects physician investigators and serves as a deterrent to their recruitment into research careers at a time when NIH has raised concerns about too few new physicians entering research careers. Since the Federal government imposed the salary cap on extramural researchers in 1990, medical schools, teaching hospitals, universities, and independent research institutes increasingly have been forced to bear more of the costs of physician-scientists' and other investigators' salaries, detracting from their investments in groundbreaking research.

It is essential to our nation's long-term health and standing in the global environment that we adopt policies to ensure that America retains the most talented, productive, and diverse group of biomedical and behavioral researchers. This is not the time to step back.

Retaining the extramural salary limit at Executive Level II will help institutions continue to attract and retain the most talented investigators in our research programs. We urge you to oppose reducing the salary limit to Executive Level III when you consider the FY 2016 Labor-HHS Appropriations bill.

Sincerely,

Academic Pediatric Association
Academy of Radiology Research
AcademyHealth
Albert Einstein College of Medicine
Allen Institute
Alliance for Academic Internal Medicine (AAIM)
American Academy of Pediatrics
American Association for Dental Research
The American Association of Colleges of Nursing
American Association of Colleges of Osteopathic Medicine
The American College of Rheumatology
American Pediatric Society
American Society for Microbiology
American Society of Nephrology
Associated Medical Schools of New York
Association for Clinical and Translational Science
Association of American Cancer Institutes
Association of American Medical Colleges
Association of American Universities
Association of Independent Research Institutes
Association of Medical School Pediatric Department Chairs
Association of Pathology Chairs
Association of Population Centers
Association of Public and Land-grant Universities

Association of Schools and Programs of Public Health
Banner Research
Baylor College of Medicine
Benaroya Research Institute at Virginia Mason
Beth Israel Deaconess Medical Center, Boston
Boston University School of Medicine
Buck Institute for Research on Aging
Case Western Reserve University
Cedars-Sinai Medical Center
Chicago Medical School at Rosalind Franklin University of Health and Science
The Children's Hospital of Philadelphia
Cincinnati Children's Hospital Medical Center
The Clinical Research Forum
Coalition for Clinical and Translational Science
Cold Spring Harbor Laboratory
Columbia University
Conference of Boston Teaching Hospitals
Cooper Medical School of Rowan University
Cornell University
Council on Governmental Relations
Creighton University School of Medicine
Dana-Farber Cancer Institute
Donald Danforth Plant Science Center
Duke University
East Carolina University – Brody School of Medicine
Eastern Virginia Medical School
Florida Atlantic University, Charles E. Schmidt College of Medicine
Florida Institute for Human & Machine Cognition (IHMC)
Florida International University
Florida State University College of Medicine
The Forsyth Institute
Fred Hutchinson Cancer Research Center
George Washington University School of Medicine and Health Sciences
HIV Medicine Association
Indiana University
Infectious Diseases Society of America
Institute for Systems Biology
J. Craig Venter Institute
The J. David Gladstone Institutes
The Jackson Laboratory
John B. Pierce Laboratory, Inc.
Johns Hopkins University
Joslin Diabetes Center
Kessler Foundation
Lahey Hospital & Medical Center
Loyola University Chicago

Magee-Womens Research Institute
Mayo Clinic
Medical College of Wisconsin
Memorial Sloan Kettering Cancer Center
Michigan State University
Michigan State University College of Human Medicine
Monell Chemical Senses Center
Mount Desert Island Biological Laboratory
Neuropsychiatric Research Institute
New York Medical College
Northeast Ohio Medical University
Northwestern University Feinberg School of Medicine
NYU Langone Medical Center
Ochsner Clinic Foundation
The Ohio State University
Oklahoma Medical Research Foundation (OMRF)
The Oakland University William Beaumont School of Medicine
Oregon Health & Science University
Oregon Research Institute
Pacific Health Research and Education Institute
Pacific Northwest Diabetes Research Institute
Partners Health Care
Pediatric Policy Council
Penn State University
Perelman School of Medicine
Population Association of America
The Public Health Institute
The Rockefeller University
Roswell Park Cancer Institute
Rush University Medical Center
Rutgers, the State University of New Jersey
Saint Louis University
The Salk Institute for Biological Studies
Sanford Burnham Prebys Medical Discovery Institute
The Scripps Research Institute
Seattle Children's Research Institute
Society for Neuroscience
Society for Pediatric Research
Society of General Internal Medicine
Southern Illinois University School of Medicine
The State University of New York
SUNY Upstate Medical University at Syracuse
Texas A&M Health Science Center
Texas Biomedical Research Institute
Texas Heart Institute
Translational Genomic Research Institute

Tufts Medical Center
Tufts University School of Medicine
Tulane University
Tulane University School of Medicine
UC San Diego Health
University at Buffalo
University of Arizona
University of California
University of California, Davis
University of California, Merced
University of California, San Francisco
University of California, Santa Barbara
University of Chicago Medical Center
University of Cincinnati
University of Colorado Boulder
University of Colorado, Anschutz Medical Campus
University of Hawaii, The John A. Burns School of Medicine and UH Cancer Center
University of Iowa
University of Kansas Medical Center
University of Louisville School of Medicine
The University of Maryland, Baltimore
University of Massachusetts Medical School
University of Michigan Medical School
The University of Miami
University of Minnesota
University of Missouri System
University of Missouri-Columbia School of Medicine
University of Missouri-Kansas City School of Medicine
University of Nebraska Medical Center
University of New Mexico
University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill
University of North Dakota School of Medicine and Health Sciences
University of Oklahoma Health Sciences Center
University of Pennsylvania School of Medicine
University of Pittsburgh
University of Rochester
University of South Florida Health
University of Southern California
University of Tennessee Health Science Center
University of Texas Health Science Center
University of Texas School of Medicine San Antonio
The University of Texas System
University of Virginia
The Warren Alpert Medical School of Brown University
The Wistar Institute
University of Washington

University of Wisconsin Health
University of Wisconsin-Madison
UTMB School of Medicine
Van Andel Research Institute
Virginia Commonwealth University School of Medicine
Wake Forest Baptist Medical Center
Washington State University
Washington University in St. Louis
Wayne State University School of Medicine
Whitehead Institute for Biomedical Research
Woods Hole Oceanographic Institution
Wright State University
Yale University School of Medicine