

May 17, 2017

**MEMORANDUM**

**TO: Sleep Research Society**

**FR: Dale Dirks and Dane Christiansen**

**RE: House LHHS Subcommittee Hearing, Transformative Power of Biomedical Research**

Earlier today, the Director of the National Institutes of Health (NIH), Dr. Francis Collins, testified before the House Labor-HHS-Education (LHHS) Appropriations Subcommittee during an oversight hearing entitled, *The Transformative Power of Biomedical Research*. During his remarks, Dr. Collins reviewed “amazing” research advancements and discussed the value and importance of NIH to scientific discovery and patient health. While appearing before the Subcommittee, Dr. Collins was joined by the Director of the National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases, Dr. Anthony Fauci; the Director of the National Heart, Lung, and Blood Institute, Dr. Gary Gibbons; the Director of the National Institute of Mental Health, Dr. Josh Gordon; the Acting Director of the National Cancer Institute, Dr. Doug Lowy; and the Director of the National Institute on Drug Abuse, Dr. Nora Volkow. The Subcommittee members in attendance had various questions for the NIH representatives regarding various priorities.

The written testimony of Dr. Collins is attached to this message and the webcast of the hearing can be found here: [https://m.youtube.com/watch?feature=youtu.be&v=z\\_B2R7Qx508](https://m.youtube.com/watch?feature=youtu.be&v=z_B2R7Qx508). Key items are included below.

**Internal NIH / HHS / Funding:**

- Dr. Collins, NIH now only funds 1/5 of all meritorious grants (down from 1/3)
- Rep. Lowey / Rep. Lee: would like to see another doubling of NIH funding
- Rep. Lowey: \$8 billion proposed cut in president’s budget would be a decrease of 24%
  - 90,000 jobs lost immediately nationwide (Lowey); 379,000 jobs directly, but 7 million overall, and every \$1 invest in NIH yields \$8.78
  - Dr. Collins: NIH current budget (last 2 yrs) is inflation + 5%
- Rep. Fleischmann: GSI / redistributing funds from investigators who have 3 or more active grants to others
- Rep. Pocan / Rep. Womack / Rep. Simpson / Dr. Collins: indirect costs, negotiated every 4 years by HHS and OMB (no NIH involvement)
  - American Lung Association was mentioned as having 0% indirect cost to ask why the US gov’t pays more in indirect costs than non-profits who award grants
  - Dr. Collins replied that non-profits are a small portion of a University budget, & colleges and universities would stop pursuing them if that were not the case
  - Indirect costs are overhead
- Hiring freeze at beginning of Administration was harmful, but the 17,000 positions involved in patient care were allowed to continue by Sec. Price

- Programs now exist where first time grant writers compete against each other instead of more experienced grant writers
- Dr. Collins: Impact of the government shutdown on NIH—alarming
  - Intramural researchers had to stay home, turn patients away at clinical center (some who were scheduled very far in advance)
  - Extramural: cancel thousands of peer review sessions for grants, rescheduled for later

### **Discoveries / Innovation:**

- Dr. Collins: recent meeting of biomedical companies at the White House, included the President briefly
- CEOs of companies applauded the “eco-system” existing between them and NIH, because their shareholders would not allow them to conduct the basic science

### **Dr. Collins Testimony:**

- NCATS was identified as a primary area where much of the innovation is currently taking place

### **IDeA:**

- Rep. Womack / Rep. Simpson: need to fund researchers, even if not at the top ten research intensive institutions

### **NIMHD / Health Disparities:**

- Rep. Lee: need to have robust funding
- Dr. Gibbons: in cardiovascular, starting to see more racial and geographical disparities (middle of the country)
- Dr. Collins: Dr. Eliseo Perez-Stable wants to bring more research projects to NIMHD