

May 23, 2025

Sen. John Thune
511 Dirksen Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

Sen. Charles E. Schumer
322 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

Rep. Mike Johnson
568 Cannon House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Rep. Hakeem S. Jeffries
2267 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Majority Leader Thune, Minority Leader Schumer, Speaker Johnson, and Minority Leader Jeffries:

The undersigned organizations write in support of robust neuroscience research funding and the need for sufficient staffing within the National Institutes of Health and other federal agencies to ensure the continuation of essential discoveries that promote brain health, innovation, and the United States' position as the global leader in biomedical research. Brain health is a continuous state of attaining and maintaining the optimal neurological function that best supports one's physical, mental, and social well-being. We believe that a lifetime of optimal brain health begins with the earliest development and extends through adolescence, adulthood, maturity, and beyond. Central to this mission and the promotion of brain health across the lifespan, we are dedicated to promoting research that prevents brain disease, mitigates disease progression, optimizes quality of life, and treats neurological conditions, many of which are chronic in nature.

One in three people will have a brain or nervous system disorder sometime in their life,¹ and the cost of treatment for this is more than \$500 billion each year. Strategies for prevention, treatment, and cures for neurological diseases rely on knowledge derived from decades of previous and ongoing research. These advancements rely upon funding from U.S. agencies, such as the National Institutes of Neurological Disorders and Stroke (NINDS), that are necessary to understand and develop life-saving therapies to treat neurologic disease. *Given the population aging, many neurological diseases are projected to be some of the most disabling and costly chronic diseases in the 21st century.* We are eager to collaborate with policymakers on this topic, recognizing that chronic disease burden cannot be adequately addressed without addressing neurologic disease and promoting brain health.

Spending on research for neurological disease represents only a small fraction of the costs of these conditions to society. The neurology community is committed to promoting evidence-based efforts to intervene upon and prevent neurological conditions, many of which are chronic in nature. Moreover, some chronic neurological conditions have well established prevention methods, such as diet, exercise, and blood pressure control for stroke prevention, while others are less well understood and require continued research in addition to medical interventions. Continuing neuroscience research not only supports the health and wellness of those currently living with a neurological condition, but all Americans who may likely develop a condition as they grow older.

Government funding of research is generally popular amongst Americans, with over 80% agreeing that the federal government should support basic scientific research that advances the frontiers of

¹ <https://www.who.int/news/item/14-03-2024-over-1-in-3-people-affected-by-neurological-conditions--the-leading-cause-of-illness-and-disability-worldwide>

knowledge.² In addition, government investment in research stimulates private investment. Each \$1 the public spends on basic research stimulates an \$8.38 increase in industry R&D spending.³ National Institutes of Health (NIH) funding has contributed to the development of 99.4% of drugs approved by the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) from 2010 to 2019.⁴ Government funding in research is also necessary for certain neurological conditions that may not experience significant private investment in research, such as for treatments for rare neuromuscular diseases. Continued research funding ensures that patients are able to enroll in clinical trials and receive treatments, which is particularly important for rare diseases or those with limited treatments. Furthermore, research support ensures that quality researchers continue their work in the United States, rather than pursuing work in other countries. Funding is critical to ensure the pipeline of researchers and treatments as our population ages and the need for neurological treatment grows.

Government funding of research has been critical to new drug discovery, medical technology innovation, improved neurological procedures, and brain health breakthroughs. It also spurs translational science and healthcare innovation, which promotes and propels the United States as a global leader in biomedical discovery. Without government support for research, Americans would not have access to treatments which address the underlying biology, genetics, or triggers of conditions like Alzheimer's disease, glioblastoma, spinal muscular atrophy, and migraine. Americans would face worse outcomes after stroke without the research that led to a medication to dissolve clots to treat acute ischemic stroke soon after symptoms appear. Government research has also led to the development of brain implants to prevent seizures and Deep Brain Stimulation to improve Parkinsons Disease symptoms. NINDS supported preclinical development work that helped establish the pathway for a new, genetically targeted treatment for SOD1-ALS. This treatment has been shown to stabilize the progression of ALS and improve muscle strength, offering new hope for people living with ALS. These investments in brain health for all Americans is closely linked to health and economic prosperity of the United States.

In order to promote brain health for all, the undersigned organizations request robust federal funding for neuroscience research, including the BRAIN Initiative and NINDS. Supporting neuroscience research goes beyond the aforementioned entities, and relies upon cross collaboration within the National Institutes of Health (NIH) to identify breakthroughs and bring efficacious treatment to the public. The sharing of information and collaborative efforts within government funded entities is essential to advancing brain health.

Examples of other key agencies and programs that are critical to neuroscience research include the National Center for Advancing Translational Sciences (NCATS), the National Institute on Aging (NIA), the National Institute of Child Health and Human Development, the FDA Orphan Drug Program, the FDA Rare Neurodegenerative Disease Grant Program, the Congressionally Directed Medical Research Program (CDMRP), the Veterans Affairs National Centers of Excellence, and the Department of Defense (DoD). **Adequate ongoing support for these agencies and programs is crucial to support the US neuroscience research enterprise and to addressing chronic disease burden over the long term. We urge policymakers to ensure these programs are adequately funded and staffed to ensure that the United States maintains its position as the global leader in biomedical research.**

² https://www.researchamerica.org/sd_question/do-you-agree-or-disagree-with-the-following-statement-even-if-it-brings-no-immediate-benefits-basic-scientific-research-that-advances-the-frontiers-of-knowledge-is-necessary-and-should-be-supported/

³ <https://www.nih.gov/about-nih/what-we-do/impact-nih-research/serving-society/spurring-economic-growth>

⁴ JAMA Health Forum. 2023;4(4):e230511. doi:10.1001/jamahealthforum.2023.0511

Finally, we were concerned to see reports that the administration is considering significant cuts to the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS), including a \$18 billion cut to the NIH, in their proposed FY 2026 budget. ***These proposed cuts, including a significant restructuring of HHS, would have a profoundly negative impact on neuroscience research and could threaten America's position as a leader in the field.*** We ask that as Congress considers the President's Budget proposal for FY 2026, that you consult stakeholders to understand the impact this could have on the nation's ability to address the burden of chronic disease.

We implore you to prioritize robust neuroscience funding and restore NIH staffing to continue essential and necessary neuroscience research to protect and promote *brain health for all*. If you have questions or concerns, please reach out to Kelly McCone, the AAN's Senior Congressional Affairs Manager at kmccone@aan.com.

Sincerely,

American Academy of Neurology
Alliance for Headache Disorders Advocacy
ALS Association
American Academy of Physical Medicine and Rehabilitation
American Academy of Sleep Medicine
American Brain Coalition
American Psychiatric Association
American Stroke Association
Brain Injury Association of America
Child Neurology Foundation
Epilepsy Foundation of America
Gerontological Society of America
Muscular Dystrophy Association
Society for Neuroscience

Cc: Sen. Susan Collins
Sen. Patty Murray
Rep. Tom Cole
Rep. Rosa DeLauro
Rep. Jason Smith
Rep. Brett Guthrie
Sen. Mike Crapo
Sen. Ron Wyden
Sen. Bill Cassidy
Sen. Bernie Sanders
Senate Appropriations Committee
House Appropriations Committee
House Ways and Means Committee
House Energy and Commerce Committee
Senate Finance Committee
Senate Health, Education, Labor and Pensions Committee