AAU SUPPORTS A $1 BILLION, OR 3.2 PERCENT, INCREASE FOR NIH IN FY11

AAU and its member research universities commend President Obama for his FY11 request of a 3.2%, or $1 billion, increase for NIH, and pledge to work with Congress and the Administration to secure this funding. Biomedical research funded by NIH and performed at AAU member universities helps assure U.S. leadership in the life sciences revolution of the 21st century. The proposed added investment in FY11 will enable research universities to pursue scientific opportunity, advance public health, and create jobs and economic growth.

SCIENTIFIC OPPORTUNITY

New research funded by NIH’s Cancer Genome Atlas project shows that glioblastomas, or brain cancers, are actually four genetically different diseases and offers the promise of new, genetically-targeted diagnostic and therapeutic approaches to cancer.

New, high-throughput technologies present research opportunities that were unimaginable 10 years ago. With today’s cutting edge imaging and computing technologies, it is possible to screen tens of thousands of compounds in the search for a therapeutic match that will target and prevent or cure a disease.

The new technique of induced pluripotent stem cells—in which four genes inserted into a skin cell prompt it to become a pluripotent stem cell that is capable of developing into a liver or heart cell—holds tremendous therapeutic promise for patients suffering from Parkinson’s disease, diabetes, and heart disease.

ADVANCING PUBLIC HEALTH

- Twenty-five years ago, 26% of elderly Americans were physically disabled, suffering from conditions that robbed them of quality of life and contributed to soaring Medicare and health care costs. Today, the disability rate for the elderly today is below 20% and dropping.

- Twenty years ago, contracting HIV was a death sentence, with a life expectancy of less than 15 months. Today’s antiretroviral therapies have raised the life expectancy of HIV-positive individuals to 70.

- In the past 40 years, fatalities from heart attack and stroke have declined by more than 60%. If the heart attacks suffered in early 2010 by former President Clinton and Vice President Cheney had occurred 20 years ago, they could have proved fatal or led to days and weeks of expensive hospitalization and an uncertain return to a normal life. Today heart disease can be treated as a chronic condition and, in President Clinton’s case, on an outpatient basis.

JOB CREATION, ECONOMIC GROWTH, AND NATIONAL LEADERSHIP

The 13,000 research grants funded by NIH through the American Reinvestment and Recovery Act will create or sustain an estimated 50,000 jobs. More than 2,000 recipients of NIH funding had never received such support before. They are, in turn, starting new labs, making new hires, and purchasing new research equipment and materials, further stimulating our struggling economy.
The nation’s biomedical research enterprise is not only the world’s biggest and best, it is an economic powerhouse. NIH funding puts 350,000 scientists to work at research institutions across the country. According to NIH, each of its research grants creates or sustains six to eight jobs. Biomedical research jobs are also high-skill and high-wage. Families USA determined that the average annual salary for an NIH-funded research job was more than $50,000. According to the Burnham Institute, NIH funding also leverages $58 billion in pharmaceutical and biotechnology investment, creating or sustaining another 580,000 private sector jobs.

The U.S. invests more in lifesaving medical science than the European Union or any other nation. But other nations, following America’s example, are beginning to build their own medical science enterprises. China recently announced the purchase of 128 of the latest genome sequencing machines and now has greater capacity for gene sequencing than the United States. We must continue to bolster our investment in NIH if we are to maintain our national leadership in the new Life Sciences Century.

**PURSUE SCIENTIFIC OPPORTUNITY, ADVANCE PUBLIC HEALTH, ASSURE U.S. ECONOMIC COMPETITIVENESS:** SUPPORT THE ADMINISTRATION’S REQUEST FOR NIH.

That President Obama has requested increased funding for NIH, even as he implements a freeze in domestic discretionary spending, demonstrates his commitment to long-term investment in biomedical research. NIH funding will continue to create jobs, improve the lives—and quality of life—of millions of current and future patients, and assure continuing U.S. economic and national security. AAU will work with the Obama Administration and Congress to secure the Administration’s request of at least a 3.2% increase for NIH in FY11.