



FRIENDS OF THE NATIONAL INSTITUTE ON AGING

A broad-based coalition of aging, disease, research, and patient groups supporting the mission of the National Institute on Aging (NIA).

March 23, 2020

The Honorable Nita M. Lowey
Chairman
Committee on Appropriations

The Honorable Kay Granger
Ranking Member
Committee on Appropriations

The Honorable Rosa DeLauro
Chairman
Committee on Appropriations
Subcommittee on Labor, HHS & Education

The Honorable Tom Cole
Ranking Member
Committee on Appropriations
Subcommittee on Labor, HHS & Education

Dear Chairwoman Lowey, Ranking Member Granger, Chairwoman DeLauro and Ranking Member Cole:

On behalf of the Friends of the National Institute on Aging (FoNIA), we are grateful for your leadership in advancing the mission of National Institutes of Health (NIH), and, in particular, the research supported and conducted by the National Institute on Aging (NIA). FoNIA is a coalition of more than 50 academic, patient-centered and non-profit organizations supporting NIA's mission to understand the nature of aging and the aging process, and diseases and conditions associated with growing older in order to extend the healthy, active years of life.

As you prepare the FY 2021 appropriations legislation, we ask that federal resources be dedicated to sustain and enhance the timely and promising aging research at NIA and across the National Institutes of Health (NIH). FoNIA requests:

- **\$44.7 billion – a \$3 billion increase - in FY 2021 for total spending at NIH**, which aligns with the overall recommendation of the Ad Hoc Group for Medical Research;
- Within this amount, **an increase of least \$500 million specifically dedicated to support cross-Institute aging research at the NIH**, including but not limited to biomedical, behavioral and social sciences aging research;
- A minimum increase of **\$354 million specific to research on Alzheimer's disease and related dementias (ADRD)**. The NIA is the primary federal agency supporting and conducting Alzheimer's disease and related dementias research.

FoNIA understands that during this time of crisis, the House Appropriations Committee is working hard to stem fallout of both the human and fiscal toll of COVID-19. We are grateful for your efforts and urge that the Committee continues work on policies that benefit us all in this unprecedented pandemic. We know that through determination, sacrifice and resilience, Americans will rise to the challenge and take the necessary steps to mitigate the fallout of this public health emergency.

Looking to fiscal year (FY) 2021, we must continue funding investments in aging research, including research for Alzheimer's disease and related dementias (ADRD). The number of people ages 65 and older in the United States is projected to more than double from 46 million today to more than 98 million by 2060.¹ Between 2020 and 2030 alone, the number of older persons is projected to increase by almost 18 million as the last of the large baby boom cohorts reaches age 65.² Although much smaller in total size, the number of people ages 85 and older is projected to more than triple from 6 million today to nearly 20 million by 2060.³

As growing numbers of Americans live well into their 80s, aging-related diseases and multiple chronic conditions will become an even larger public health concern. Advancing age is the major risk factor for a number of chronic diseases. For example, as our nation ages, incidences of the number of persons affected by dementia are expected to double by 2060 from around 5 million cases today to 14.9 million cases.⁴

The NIA sponsors and conducts the lion's share of federal aging-related research and this pioneering research contributes significantly to the improved care and quality of life of older adults. A key NIA priority is to translate research into better and more efficient care through the development of effective interventions that are disseminated to health care providers, patients and caregivers. These interventions for the prevention, early detection, diagnosis and treatment of disease will help reduce the burden of illness for older adults and reduce the cost of care.

NIA is at the forefront of applying scientific advancements to enhance the health of older adults, lengthen life, and reduce illness and disability. NIA supports studies on aging through extramural and intramural programs, focusing on aging processes, age-related diseases, and special problems and needs of the aged. The extramural program funds

¹ POPULATION REFERENCE BUREAU, Population Bulletin, VOL. 70, NO. 2 (December, 2015) (www.prb.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/01/aging-us-population-bulletin-1.pdf).

² *Ibid.*

³ *Ibid.*

⁴ Matthews, Kevin A. et al., Racial and ethnic estimates of Alzheimer's disease and related dementias in the United States (2015–2060) in adults aged ≥65 years, *Alzheimer's & Dementia: The Journal of the Alzheimer's Association*, Volume 15, Issue 1, 17 – 24 (2018) (www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/30243772). The burden of ADRD in 2014 was an estimated 5.0 million adults aged ≥65 years or 1.6% of the population. ADRD burden will double to 3.3% by 2060 when 13.9 million Americans are projected to have the disease.

research and training at universities, hospitals, medical centers, and other public and private organizations nationwide.

In the area of dementia, NIA supports vital research where more scientific investigation is needed to improve AD/ADRD prevention, diagnosis, treatment and care; basic science approaches to illuminate neurodegenerative mechanisms/pathways; and computational/biological systems approaches to identify, model and predict the architecture and dynamics of the molecular interactions underlying AD/ADRD pathogenesis.

With your continued support, NIA is accelerating scientific discoveries in aging. With millions of Americans facing the loss of their functional abilities, their independence and their lives to chronic diseases of aging, there is a pressing need for robust and sustained investment in the vital work of the NIA. Continued, and meaningful investments in the NIA will make it possible to ultimately enhance the quality of care for older adults across the nation.

Thank you for your consideration of this funding request. Should you need additional information, feel free to contact me at esokol@alzfdn.org or at 202.643.9601.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Eric W. Sokol". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large initial "E" and "S".

Eric W. Sokol
Chair, FoNIA