

Researchers**Against**Alzheimer's

February 11, 2013

Dear Speaker Boehner, Majority Leader Reid, Minority Leader Pelosi, and Minority Leader McConnell:

As researchers who have dedicated our lives to pursuing treatments and therapies for Alzheimer's disease and other dementias, we are writing to urge that you protect the federal funding that is essential to sustaining and accelerating this work.

In less than 30 days, across-the-board cuts to federal biomedical research programs are scheduled to take effect unless Congress takes action to delay or amend the terms of the sequestration. The cuts – estimated to exceed more than \$2 billion at the National Institutes of Health (NIH) alone – threaten to decimate valuable research programs including efforts focused on discovery of treatments and therapies for Alzheimer's disease. With more than 5 million Americans currently suffering from Alzheimer's at an annual cost of \$200 billion – 70 percent or \$140 billion of which is shouldered by the taxpayers through Medicare and Medicaid spending – a robust commitment to high-impact Alzheimer's research is essential if we hope to stop this disease before it destroys the nation's health and financial well-being.

Less than one year ago, the United States recognized the threat posed by Alzheimer's by issuing the landmark National Plan to Address Alzheimer's Disease that enumerates as goal one preventing and effectively treating the disease by 2025. Enacted unanimously by Congress through the National Alzheimer's Project Act, the plan is the nation's recognition of the urgency posed by the current and looming Alzheimer's and dementia crisis. Achieving the goal of 2025 will be impossible if the deep and unsustainable cuts to valuable Alzheimer's disease research, public health, and patient and caregiver support programs take effect.

Our government took an important step forward last year by committing an additional \$50 million to support Alzheimer's research at the NIH in Fiscal Year 2012. This funding is supporting a number of cutting edge research projects, including one exploring the effect of insulin as a treatment for Alzheimer's and another seeking to prevent onset of Alzheimer's in those genetically likely to develop the disease. But the implementation of blunt instrument cuts via the sequester threatens to undo this modest but important step forward, setting back the field and promising pursuits that may one day lead to scientific breakthroughs of effective therapies. To that point, the National Institute on Aging last year issued a solicitation to support additional high-impact research efforts, but the Institute's ability to fund any of these projects will be severely compromised if the cuts take effect.

We recognize that as Members of Congress, you must make tough decisions as to our nation's priorities. As scientists and clinicians, we strongly believe that the only path to a healthy population and less costly healthcare system is through the continued development and application of novel treatments and therapies. From polio to cancer and from heart disease to HIV/AIDS, we have seen that a commitment to research and discovery pays off. It's time to move Alzheimer's and dementia into that same category by protecting our nation's commitment to biomedical research.

Founding Members of ResearchersAgainstAlzheimer's

Affiliations are for identification purposes only and do not necessarily represent the endorsement of the affiliated institution.

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*** Next Generation of Alzheimer's Researchers**