



National Health Council

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National Health Council

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Myrl Weinberg, CAE
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March 18, 2011

Letters Editor

Financial Times

One Southwark Bridge

London SE1 9HL

UK

Dear Editor:

The National Health Council, a US organization that provides a united voice for people with chronic diseases and disabilities and their family caregivers, shares the deep concerns expressed in the *Financial Times* about excessive budget cuts to federal medical research. ("Drug companies and scientists ire over budget cuts," March 16, 2011)

There are more than 133 million people with chronic diseases and disabilities in the United States. Nearly 18 million people have been diagnosed with diabetes. As many as 5.3 million Americans are living with Alzheimer's disease. Approximately 500,000 people are believed to suffer from Parkinson's disease. Yet drugs that may arrest the progression of these and other diseases have not been brought to market.

We need to support research funded by the National Institutes of Health (NIH) and an appropriate review process for new drugs and devices by the Food and Drug Administration in order to bring us closer to a day of prevention, early diagnosis, and a cure.

We cannot overlook the fact our federal research programs serve as an important economic driver and jobs creator. As the director of the National Institutes of Health, Dr. Francis Collins, has stated, every \$1 US awarded by the NIH for research returns \$2.21 in goods and services to the local economy in a year. The NIH directly supports about 350,000 jobs.

To make severe cuts to the federal research and product authorization programs, as proposed by some members of Congress, will only undermine current vital innovation projects that create good-paying jobs here at home and keep the United States competitive in science and research abroad.

Sincerely,

Myrl Weinberg

President

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