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New United for Medical Research Coalition to Advocate for Increased NIH Funding in Federal Budget

Twenty prominent research institutions, advocacy organizations and biomedical industry leaders join together for Capitol Hill launch of multi-year campaign around “The Life Sciences Century”

WASHINGTON, DC – Today, twenty of the nation’s most prominent research institutions, health advocacy organizations and biomedical industry leaders launched a multi-year campaign to push for increased federal funding for medical research through the National Institutes of Health (NIH). The new coalition is called United for Medical Research (UMR).

“At a time when our nation is looking for new ways to help people live longer, healthier lives and rebuild our economy, sustained investments in the life sciences through the only federal agency specifically designed for this purpose – the NIH – makes more sense than ever,” said **Wendy Selig**, Vice President of External Affairs & Strategic Alliances for American Cancer Society Cancer Action Network (ACS CAN), speaking on behalf of the group. “Advances in our understanding of the way life works have pushed us into a new phase of biological study, where scientists know where to look to find cures. They just need the funding to get there. Our mission is to make sure NIH funding remains a national priority.”

The announcement was made at an event on Capitol Hill, where the group also hosted the first installment of a summer seminar series for Congressional staff and media. Today’s event, a panel discussion entitled “NIH Research Driving the Life Sciences Century,” featured experts who testified to the importance of sustained NIH funding and the exciting integration of life sciences. Panelists included: J. Leonard Lichtenfeld, MD, MACP, Deputy Chief Medical Officer at the American Cancer Society; Michelle McMurry MD, PhD, Health, Biomedical Science, and Society Policy Program Director at the Aspen Institute; David Valle, MD, Henry J. Knott Professor and Director, McKusick-Nathans Institute of Genetic Medicine, Johns Hopkins University School of Medicine; Kacy Redd, PhD, Research Associate, Science & Mathematics Education Policy, Association of Public and Land-grant Universities; and Jeff Lieberman, PhD Candidate in the Robotic Life group at the MIT Media Lab, and host of the Discovery Channel's “Time Warp” program.

Speaking to the importance of the new coalition’s mission, **Dr. Valle** of Johns Hopkins noted: “Just as the advances in physics and information technology drove U.S. leadership in the 19th and 20th centuries, the coming biomedical revolution, fueled by NIH-supported research, will be critical to economic leadership and well-being in the 21st century. Indeed, it may very well come

to be known as the ‘Life Sciences Century.’”

Current members of the new United for Medical Research coalition include: The American Diabetes Association; The American Heart Association; The Association of American Universities; The Association of Independent Research Institutes; The Association of Public and Land-grant Universities; Biotechnology Industry Organization (BIO); The American Cancer Society Cancer Action Network (ACS CAN); Emory University; The Endocrine Society; Genentech; Harvard University; Johns Hopkins University; Life Technologies; National Alliance for Eye and Vision Research; The National Health Council; The University of Pennsylvania; The Pharmaceutical Research and Manufacturers of America (PhRMA); Stanford University; University of Southern California; Washington University in St. Louis.

More information about UMR, as well as video of today’s panel discussion, can be found on the group’s website: www.unitedformedicalresearch.com.

About United for Medical Research (UMR):

Twenty of the nation’s most prominent research institutions, health advocacy organizations and biomedical industry leaders have united behind a single purpose: to call upon the United States to make a new commitment to funding the NIH. We’re seeking consistent increases in the NIH budget over the long term, because the fruits of science are a necessity, not a luxury, as much in hard times as in good. We’re calling our efforts United for Medical Research (UMR). And we’re launching a multi-year advocacy and education campaign to seek the NIH funding necessary for delivering on the promise of the Life Sciences Century. To learn more, visit: unitedformedicalresearch.com.