

April 21, 2020

The Honorable Mitch McConnell
Majority Leader
United States Senate
S-226, United States Capitol
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Nancy Pelosi
Speaker
United States House of Representatives
H-232, United States Capitol
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Charles Schumer
Minority Leader
United States Senate
S-255, United States Capitol
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Kevin McCarthy
Minority Leader
United States House of Representatives
H-204, United States Capitol
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Speaker Pelosi, Minority Leader McCarthy, Majority Leader McConnell, and Minority Leader Schumer,

Congress has delivered unprecedented support through emergency supplemental appropriations to respond to the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic. The Friends of NIDDK thank you for your leadership in passing the Coronavirus Preparedness and Response Supplemental Appropriations Act, the Families First Coronavirus Response Act, and the CARES Act to address the health concerns and economic hardships experienced by all Americans as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic.

The Friends of NIDDK is a coalition of professional societies and patient advocacy groups with a commitment to promoting and sustaining the vital research activities of the National Institute of Diabetes & Digestive & Kidney Diseases (NIDDK) within the National Institutes of Health (NIH). The coalition was established with the vision of uniting organizations to speak with one voice about the important research being conducted by NIDDK.

As you develop the next phase of an emergency response, we urge you to **consider increased funding for NIDDK, which supports research into a number of diseases and chronic conditions that are linked to COVID-19 related comorbidities**. As the need for significant investments in research is high as it relates to the COVID-19 response and will remain high beyond this pandemic, **we also ask Congress to ensure all funds appropriated as part of the recovery are not offset by future cuts**. Additional resources will be vital for NIDDK to continue research, monitoring, and evaluation efforts, particularly as experts predict there could be additional waves of COVID-19 on a seasonal basis.

NIDDK has made many scientific advances by conducting and supporting medical research and research training for diabetes and other endocrine and metabolic disease; digestive diseases; nutritional disorders and obesity; and kidney, urologic, and hematologic diseases. Collectively these are among the most chronic, costly, and consequential for patients, their families, and the nation.

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) has determined that COVID-19 is a serious public health threat—and older adults and people with underlying health conditions including the above-mentioned diseases, are at a higher risk of experiencing complications and getting very sick from it.¹

¹ Preliminary estimates of the prevalence of selected underlying health conditions among patients with coronavirus disease 2019 – United States, February 12 – March 28th 2020, CDC COVID-19 Response team, https://www.cdc.gov/mmwr/volumes/69/wr/mm6913e2.htm?s_cid=mm6913e2_w

Therefore, it is important that NIDDK receives an increase in funding in the next phase of legislation responding to COVID-19 as NIDDK can research critical questions concerning COVID-19 and vulnerable populations with comorbidities, including people with diabetes, kidney, and liver diseases.

The Friends of NIDDK believe that a strong long-term investment in NIDDK research is necessary to protect these vulnerable populations and improve their lives through research and programs that address the health challenges facing these individuals. Again, thank you for your leadership and in addressing the COVID-19 pandemic. We appreciate your attention to this matter and the Friends of NIDDK looks forward to working with you to address the challenges facing people living with serious chronic medical conditions during this national emergency. If you have any questions, please contact Jerrica Mathis at jmathis@crowell.com.

Sincerely,

Alagille Syndrome Alliance
American Association for the Study of Liver Diseases
American Diabetes Association
American Gastroenterological Association
American Kidney Fund
American Liver Foundation
American Nephrology Nurses Association
American Pancreatic Association
American Psychological Association Services, Inc.
American Society of Pediatric Nephrology
American Society of Nephrology
American Society for Nutrition
American Urogynecologic Society
American Urological Association
Beyond Celiac
Certification Board for Diabetes Care and Education
Crohn's & Colitis Foundation
Endocrine Society
Global Liver Institute
IFFGD (International Foundation for Gastrointestinal Disorders)
Interstitial Cystitis Association
JDRF
National Kidney Foundation
NephCure
Organic Acidemia Association
Renal Physicians Association
The Oley Foundation
The Simon Foundation for Continence