

March 2, 2021

The Honorable Charles Schumer
Majority Leader
U.S. Senate
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Mitch McConnell
Minority Leader
U.S. Senate
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Nancy Pelosi
Speaker
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Kevin McCarthy
Minority Leader
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Leader Schumer, Leader McConnell, Speaker Pelosi, and Leader McCarthy:

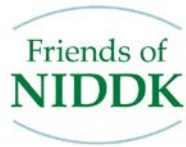
On behalf of the 37 undersigned patient, physician, and research organizations who are members of the Friends of the NIDDK, thank you for your ongoing bipartisan investment in the National Institutes of Health (NIH).

We write to support the research community's **FY 2022 NIH funding recommendation of at least \$46.111 billion**, a \$3.177 billion increase over the comparable FY 2021 funding level for the NIH, which would allow for the NIH's base budget to keep pace with the biomedical research and development price index (BRDPI) of 2.3 % and allow meaningful growth of 5%. We request a **proportionate increase for the National Institute of Diabetes, Digestive and Kidney Diseases (NIDDK) of at least \$157 million for a total of \$2.289 billion in FY 2022**. This level of increase over its FY 2021 funding is necessary for NIDDK to fulfill its mission to conduct and support medical research, research training, and to disseminate science-based information on diabetes and other endocrine and metabolic diseases; digestive diseases, nutritional disorders, and obesity; and kidney, urologic, and hematologic diseases; along with population health research to improve people's health and quality of life.

We also strongly encourage you to **provide supplemental emergency funding of \$10 billion for NIH, ensure dedicated support for the NIDDK to enable critical COVID-related research**, and support research recovery from the impact of the pandemic.

Our organizations are grateful for the funding that Congress has already provided to the NIH, including several of its institutes and centers, to respond to the public health emergency. However, we note that to date NIDDK has not received any emergency funding despite researching diseases that are associated with increased risk of severe COVID-19 outcomes. Without dedicated emergency funding, NIDDK must divert funding from other scientific areas within its mission to study the effects of COVID-19, an unnecessary loss to the patients who ultimately benefit from research funded by NIDDK.

As health professionals and researchers respond to this pandemic, our understanding of COVID-19 continues to evolve. What we originally understood to be an infectious, respiratory virus, we now know disproportionately impacts individuals with diabetes, obesity, liver disease and kidney diseases. COVID-



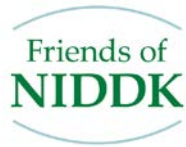
COVID-19 infection damages a variety of organ systems, including the kidneys and it may even contribute to new onset of kidney failure and diabetes. Further, time has revealed the occurrence of post-acute COVID-19 syndrome (PACS), in which individuals experience persistent symptoms after recovering from their initial illness. Patients also are experiencing hematologic complications, including coagulation and hematopoietic dysfunction. Yet, without additional funding, NIDDK will be forced to divert crucial funds from its existing priorities to better understand these characteristics of COVID-19.

It is critical to understand the unique aspects of how the virus presents and progresses in patients with the comorbid conditions NIDDK is charged with studying to help health professionals treat patients with COVID-19. With emergency supplemental funding, NIDDK will be able to support research on SARS-CoV-2/COVID-19 as it intersects with and affects people with or at risk for diabetes and other metabolic diseases, obesity, and endocrine, digestive, hepatobiliary, pancreas, kidney, urological and hematologic tissues and diseases. Specific areas of research include:

- Determining the basis for the link between COVID-19 severity and diseases in the mission of NIDDK or the therapeutic modalities for those conditions.
- Identifying novel pathogenic pathways and potential translational targets for the treatment or prevention of kidney, gastrointestinal, and endocrine/metabolic diseases associated with SARS-CoV-2 infection.
- Understanding the roles of health disparities at risk for SARS-CoV-2 infection, organ injury, and adverse disease outcomes. The substantial health disparities associated with many conditions within NIDDK's mission – obesity, type 2 diabetes, kidney, liver and digestive diseases—may contribute to the increasingly well documented disparities in COVID-19 outcomes for various racial and ethnic groups.

In addition to new areas of research, the pandemic has created additional barriers and expenses that complicate restarting research. Supplemental funds are needed to:

- Restart research projects, programs, and clinical trials that were underway before the onset of the pandemic and were stopped or delayed for safety reasons, consequently stalling or delaying new discoveries.
- Support early-stage investigators as they face uncertainties and challenges in making progress in their fields and careers, especially women investigators and others who are disproportionately affected by caregiving roles during the pandemic and members of groups underrepresented in research.
- Provide financial support so that critical research support staff can be retained during the pandemic to accelerate the eventual resumption of research activities post-pandemic.
- Address increasing research costs. The burden of restarting clinical trials, animal colonies, and other programs and resources has made conducting research more challenging and expensive during the pandemic. Costs for personal protective equipment (PPE), comprehensive cleaning, and "time sharing" in laboratories are a few examples.



Our nation’s progress against COVID-19 – and every other health threat – is built on the longstanding bipartisan commitment to medical research. Preserving that investment will be key to continued advances. We urge you to continue to support the NIH with a \$3.1 billion increase for FY 2022 and provide emergency supplemental funds for NIH, including at least \$2.289 billion for the NIDDK, to ensure we lead the world in providing new and better cures, diagnostics, and treatments while protecting all patients and the research enterprise. If you have any questions or if you would like additional information about the work of NIDDK, please contact Mila Becker at mbecker@endocrine.org who will be happy to assist or provide you with a contact at any of the organizations below.

Sincerely,

Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics

American Association for the Study of Liver Diseases

American Association of Colleges of Pharmacy

American College of Lifestyle Medicine

American Diabetes Association

American Gastroenterological Association

American Kidney Fund

American Liver Foundation

American Nephrology Nurses Association

American Pancreatic Association

American Psychological Association

American Society for Nutrition

American Society of Hematology

American Society of Nephrology

American Society of Pediatric Nephrology

American Urogynecologic Society

American Urological Association

Beyond Celiac

Certification Board for Diabetes Care and Education



Color of Crohn's & Chronic Illness

Crohn's & Colitis Foundation

Digestive Disease National Coalition

Endocrine Society

FARE

Global Liver Institute

International Foundation for Gastrointestinal Disorders (IFFGD)

Interstitial Cystitis Association

JDRF

National Kidney Foundation

National Pancreas Foundation

NephCure Kidney International

North American Society for Pediatric Gastroenterology, Hepatology and Nutrition

Organic Acidemia Association

PKD Foundation

The American Liver Foundation

The Simon Foundation for Continence

Women First Research Coalition