



University of Colorado

Boulder | Colorado Springs | Denver | Anschutz Medical Campus

August 13, 2024

The Honorable Cathy McMorris Rodgers  
Chair, Committee on Energy and Commerce  
United States House of Representatives  
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chair Rodgers,

On behalf of the University of Colorado (CU), we appreciate the opportunity to respond to your framework to reform the National Institutes of Health (NIH).

The University of Colorado is a premier public research university with four campuses: the University of Colorado Boulder, the University of Colorado Colorado Springs, the University of Colorado Denver and the University of Colorado Anschutz Medical Campus. With more than 66,000 students and 7,300 full-time instructional faculty members, CU is the largest institution of higher education in the state of Colorado. With an annual budget of \$6.3 billion, CU generates an economic impact of \$17.2 billion annually for the state. CU researchers attracted \$1.6 billion in sponsored research funding and gifts in fiscal year 2022-23. CU has launched 293 startups. Academic prestige is marked by CU's five Nobel laureates, 10 MacArthur "genius" Fellows, 20 astronauts and 21 Rhodes Scholars.

For fiscal year (FY) 2023, CU campuses received over \$420 million in NIH funding from over 950 awards – interacting with almost all 27 NIH institutes.<sup>1</sup> Research conducted by CU investigators helps drive clinical care and treatments for Coloradans at our clinical partners, such as UCHHealth and the University of Colorado Hospital, Children's Hospital of Colorado, and Denver Health –among other health centers in Colorado. Additionally, programs at CU campuses train our future biomedical workforce and partner with local health centers to address comorbidities in Colorado.

These grants include significant partnerships with the National Heart, Lung, and Blood Institute (NHLBI), the National Cancer Institute (NCI), the National Institute on Diabetes and Digestive and Kidney Diseases (NIDDK), the National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Disease (NIAID), and the National Institute of Aging (NIA) to name a few. For FY 2023, partnerships like the ones established

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<sup>1</sup> U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. (n.d.). NIH awards by location and Organization - NIH Research Portfolio Online Reporting Tools (report). National Institutes of Health. <https://report.nih.gov/award/index.cfm>

by CU supported over 7,000 jobs for NIH extramural research and \$1.5 billion in economic activity in Colorado.<sup>2</sup>

We believe any legislative efforts to reform NIH should focus on supporting high-quality science, improving efficiency, accelerating medical progress, promoting the next generation of researchers and clinicians, and protecting U.S. competitiveness in the biomedical sciences. It is appropriate to examine ways to make NIH's administrative functions more efficient. However, realignment must incorporate researcher and patient perspectives, scientific convergence, and the current practice of medicine. Any changes to NIH's structure should be conducted in a phased approach that provides clarity for investigators and grantees.

The partnership between the federal government and research universities that emerged out of World War II is a significant reason why our country is the envy of the world and the global innovation leader. This partnership – whereby the federal government, through competitively awarded grants, funds university research on behalf of the nation – has yielded major scientific advances, including tremendous improvements in human health, and helped train America's most prominent scientists, engineers, and entrepreneurs.

Legislation should continue to build on federal government partnerships with research institutions and recognize the importance of institutional support in NIH grants. Universities are not fully reimbursed for the expenses they incur to provide the infrastructure and support to conduct federally supported research on their campuses. Any constraints on this support would prevent institutions from developing life-saving treatments and cures.

Providing more opportunities for early career researchers should also be a priority for new NIH legislation. However, placing limits on the number of NIH grants a researcher can obtain will not help build our biomedical research pathway. Instead, it may place unnecessary barriers on scientists who may otherwise discover life-saving treatments or cures. To increase the path for early career researchers, we encourage Congress to invest in programs that will mentor, develop, and train our future research workforce.

Additionally, CU believes it is imperative that the NIH have clear and robust processes for addressing misconduct. Addressing research misconduct ensures that public research universities have trustworthy and reliable science. Addressing sexual, gender, and all other forms of harassment is critical for ensuring safe and inclusive research labs and a diverse STEM workforce. We are committed to working with Congress to ensure all researchers are in a safe environment.

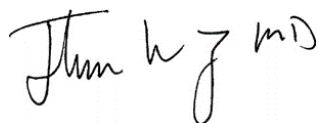
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<sup>2</sup> NIH Funding at Work in Colorado. United For Medical Research. (2024, March 20).  
<https://www.unitedformedicalresearch.org/nih-in-your-state/colorado>

In conclusion, NIH-sponsored programs at CU illustrate the importance of sustaining the longstanding partnership between academic institutions and the NIH to ensure patients nationwide receive top-notch healthcare services. To ensure CU biomedical researchers can develop immunotherapies, cures, and treatments to advance the public health of all Americans, Congress must continue to fund the NIH with sustainable growth in FY 25 and in the years ahead.

As you continue your efforts to modernize the NIH, our experts are here to provide advice and opinions. For further questions, please contact Brett Roude, Assistant Vice President of Federal Relations and Health Policy, at [brett.roude@cu.edu](mailto:brett.roude@cu.edu) or 202-281-9301.

Sincerely,



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