

March 25, 2021

The Honorable Rosa L. DeLauro
Chairwoman
House Committee on Appropriations
Chairwoman
Subcommittee on Labor, HHS & Education

The Honorable Kay Granger
Ranking Member
House Committee on Appropriations

The Honorable Tom Cole
Ranking Member
House Committee on Appropriations
Subcommittee on Labor, HHS & Education

Dear Chairwoman DeLauro, Ranking Member Granger, and Ranking Member Cole:

The American Geriatrics Society (AGS), a national non-profit organization comprised of nearly 6,000 geriatrics healthcare professionals and basic and clinical researchers specializing in aging, appreciates your collective support of the National Institute on Aging (NIA). Since it was established in 1974, the NIA has supported groundbreaking research on the diseases and disorders of aging which has improved the health and quality of life of all Americans as we age.

We respectfully request your support for increased fiscal year (FY) 2022 funding for aging research efforts at the National Institutes of Health (NIH) and the National Institute on Aging (NIA) within the U.S. Department of Health & Human Services (HHS).

As a member of Friends of the NIA (FoNIA)—a broad-based coalition of aging, disease, research, and patient groups committed to the advancement of medical research that affects millions of older Americans—**the AGS urges you to include a \$3.3 billion increase over the enacted FY 2021 level in the FY 2022 budget for total spending at NIH. The AGS also supports an increase of at least \$500 million in the FY 2022 budget for biomedical, behavioral, and social sciences aging research efforts across NIH and a minimum increase of \$289 million for research on Alzheimer’s disease and related dementias over the enacted FY 2021 level.**

We continue to face a public health emergency with COVID-19 which has disproportionately impacted older, medically complex individuals. The toll taken by the pandemic among our older loved ones has brought into sharp focus the need to increase research at the NIA, and across NIH, on the nature of aging, including its biology and impact on disease and disability, and the role of social determinants of health on our bodies and minds as we age, so we can identify the most effective interventions for age-related diseases, disorders, and disabilities. Furthermore, there is emerging evidence that Post-Acute Sequelae of SARS-CoV-2 infection (PASC), often referred to as Long COVID, affects approximately 10-30 percent of individuals who had COVID-19.^{1,2} We

¹ Rubin R. As Their Numbers Grow, COVID-19 “Long Haulers” Stump Experts. *JAMA*. 2020; 324(14):1381–1383. <https://doi.org/10.1001/jama.2020.17709>.

² Logue JK, et al. Sequelae in Adults at 6 Months After COVID-19 Infection. *JAMA Network Open*. 2021; 4(2): e210830-e210830. <https://doi.org/10.1001/jamanetworkopen.2021.0830>.

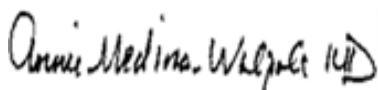
support continued funding for research that advances medical understanding of PASC and real-time results to support providers in developing best practices for care.

The AGS believes that sustained and enhanced federal investments in aging research are essential to delivering high-quality, coordinated, and efficient care to older adults, whose numbers across the U.S. are projected to increase dramatically in the coming years. According to the U.S. Census Bureau, the number of people age 65 and older is projected to more than double from 54.1 million today³ to more than 94 million by 2060,⁴ while those 85 and older is projected to more than triple from 6.4 million today to 19 million by 2060.⁵ As our aging population increases, so too will the prevalence of diseases disproportionately affecting older people—most notably Alzheimer’s disease and related dementias (including vascular, Lewy body, and frontotemporal dementia)—and the economic burden associated with these diseases. By 2060, for example, the number of people affected by dementia is estimated to reach 14.9 million cases—nearly triple the number in 2020.⁶ Further, chronic diseases related to aging, such as diabetes, heart disease, and cancer continue to afflict 80 percent of people age 65 and older⁷ and account for more than 75 percent of Medicare and other federal health expenditures.⁸

As we know you appreciate, the NIA sponsors and conducts most federal aging-related research and applies scientific advancements to enhance the health, safety, and independence of older adults. The ongoing federal commitment to investments in science, research, and technology leads to cutting-edge discoveries in medicine and improved patient care and reduced costs. Breakthroughs from NIH research can not only delay the onset of costly age-related diseases but also can save trillions of dollars by the middle of the current century. The AGS urges Congress to strengthen its commitment in FY 2022 so that we may advance medicine to improve care quality and fully achieve the goals of delivery system reform.

Thank you for your consideration of this funding request. If you have comments or questions about NIH funding or other issues related to the healthy aging of older Americans, please contact Anna Kim, Manager of Public Affairs & Advocacy, at 212-308-1414 or akim@americangeriatrics.org.

Sincerely,



Annette Medina-Walpole, MD, AGSF
President



Nancy E. Lundebjerg, MPA
Chief Executive Officer

³ U.S. Census Bureau. (2020). 2019 American Community Survey 1-Year Estimates Subject Tables. Available at <https://data.census.gov/cedsci/table?q=S0101&tid=ACSST1Y2019.S0101&hidePreview=false>.

⁴ U.S. Census Bureau. (2018). An Aging Nation: Projected Number of Children and Older Adults. Available at <https://www.census.gov/library/visualizations/2018/comm/historic-first.html>.

⁵ Ibid.

⁶ Matthews, KA, et al. (2019). Racial and ethnic estimates of Alzheimer's disease and related dementias in the United States (2015–2060) in adults aged ≥ 65 years. *Alzheimer's & Dementia*, 2019; 15(1):17-24. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jalz.2018.06.3063>.

⁷ National Prevention Council. (2016). Healthy Aging in Action: Advancing the National Prevention Strategy. Available at <https://www.cdc.gov/aging/pdf/healthy-aging-in-action508.pdf>.

⁸ Erdem, E, Prada, SI, Haffer, SC. Medicare Payments: How Much Do Chronic Conditions Matter? *Medicare & Medicaid Research Review*, 2013; 3(2). <http://dx.doi.org/10.5600/mmrr.003.02.b02>.

March 25, 2021

The Honorable Patrick Leahy
Chairman
U.S. Senate Committee on Appropriations

The Honorable Richard Shelby
Vice Chairman
U.S. Senate Committee on Appropriations

The Honorable Patty Murray
Chairwoman
U.S. Senate Committee on Appropriations
Subcommittee on Labor, HHS & Education

The Honorable Roy Blunt
Ranking Member
U.S. Committee on Appropriations
Subcommittee on Labor, HHS & Education

Dear Chairman Leahy, Vice Chairman Shelby, Chairwoman Murray, and Ranking Member Blunt:

The American Geriatrics Society (AGS), a national non-profit organization comprised of nearly 6,000 geriatrics healthcare professionals and basic and clinical researchers specializing in aging, appreciates your collective support of the National Institute on Aging (NIA). Since it was established in 1974, the NIA has supported groundbreaking research on the diseases and disorders of aging which has improved the health and quality of life of all Americans as we age.

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medical understanding of PASC and real-time results to support providers in developing best practices for care.

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⁴ U.S. Census Bureau. (2018). An Aging Nation: Projected Number of Children and Older Adults. Available at <https://www.census.gov/library/visualizations/2018/comm/historic-first.html>.

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