



**American
Heart
Association.**

May 6, 2019

Dear Chairwoman Lowey and Ranking Member Granger:

The American Heart Association is grateful that the U.S. House of Representatives Labor, Health and Human Services, Education, and Related Agencies Appropriations Subcommittee has rejected the president's budget proposal that cuts funding for life-saving medical research conducted by the National Institutes of Health (NIH) and vital support to fight cardiovascular disease at the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC).

The FY 2020 appropriations bill passed by the subcommittee will help advance new scientific research that will lead to a better understanding of heart disease and stroke and the development of new treatments for these deadly and debilitating conditions. Previous funding for cardiovascular disease research has led to significant declines in mortality rates and is essential to helping our nation prepare for the demands of an aging population. The bill provides a total of **\$41.1 billion for the NIH**, an increase of \$2 billion above the 2019 enacted level and \$6.9 billion above the president's budget request.

Within the NIH, the bill provides **\$3.65 billion for the National Heart, Lung, and Blood Institute (NHLBI)** a \$170 million increase above FY 2019 and \$647 million above the president's budget. This will help sustain and bolster the study of the genetic causes of atrial fibrillation (AFib), the most common type of irregular heartbeat; research seeking to understand the connections between cardiovascular health and brain health and the risk factors leading to cognitive impairment and dementia; and the development of improved interventions to control hypertension in African-Americans and other susceptible populations.

The legislation passed by the subcommittee further provides **\$2.315 billion for the National Institute of Neurological Disorders and Stroke (NINDS)** a \$41 million increase above FY 2019 and \$289 million above the president's budget. This funding will enhance existing initiatives and proactively advance the top priorities in stroke prevention, treatment and recovery research, particularly endovascular therapy, early stroke recovery, tele-rehabilitation, and the assessment of stroke risk in populations where health disparities exist.

The appropriations bill passed by the subcommittee also provides **\$8.3 billion for the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC)** – \$921 million above the 2019 enacted level and \$1.7 billion above the president's budget request. This includes \$160 million for the Division for Heart Disease and Stroke Prevention to support, strengthen, and expand cardiovascular disease prevention initiatives within state, local, and tribal public health departments and \$250 million to address the prolific use of tobacco and e-cigarettes; especially among teenagers.

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Finally, the bill will help ensure that more Americans can access affordable, high-quality health insurance by directing the **Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS)** to support the Affordable Care Act (ACA) Navigators Program and restore outreach and advertising efforts during the ACA open enrollment period. Resources that help consumers understand and select healthcare coverage will lead to higher rates of enrollment and will contribute to the stabilization of insurance markets and lower premiums for enrollees.

Cardiovascular disease is the leading cause of death and disability in the United States, accounting for 1 of every 3 deaths. The American Heart Association calls on Congress to respond to the challenges presented by heart disease and stroke by generously funding the NIH and CDC and urges the full committee to pass the Labor, Health and Human Services, Education and Related Agencies appropriations bill. We further encourage congressional leaders to pass a bipartisan budget deal to raise the FY 2020 budget caps to prevent harmful cuts to promising medical research and life-saving public health initiatives.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "John Laughner". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "John" being more prominent than the last name "Laughner".

John Laughner
Government Relations Manager
American Heart Association