



Chairman Hal Rogers

House Committee on Appropriations

FY 2017 Budget Hearing of the National Institutes of Health

March 16, 2016

Opening Statement As Prepared

Mr. Chairman, thank you for yielding. Dr. Collins, welcome. I appreciate the opportunity to discuss the National Institutes of Health Fiscal Year (FY) 2017 budget request with you today.

Through all of our work together, Dr. Collins, you have exhibited the highest level of professionalism and dedication. During a time of so much groundbreaking research in addiction science, Alzheimer's, and cancer, NIH surely has the right man at the helm to meet the challenges at hand.

The emergence of the Zika Virus throughout the Western Hemisphere is one of these challenges that underscores the importance of NIH's mission - to gain and apply knowledge to enhance health, lengthen life, and reduce illness and disability. Since its most recent emergence in Brazil 10 months ago, Zika has spread to dozens of countries. Although CDC does not anticipate any widespread outbreak in the US, we have had 193 travel-associated cases reported thus far. I just returned from a visit to South America, where I met with various leaders and health officials about the spread of this virus. We are interested to hear your thoughts on the role NIH can play to develop vaccines and therapeutics based on existing and future research to limit Americans' exposure going forward.

Given the importance of NIH research, I am proud that we were able to work in a bipartisan fashion to increase your budget in FY 2016 by \$2 billion to fund more groundbreaking medical research. This year, the NIH budget request prioritizes basic, foundational research, precision medicine, and applying Big Data to improve health outcomes. In addition to the public health benefits that accompany NIH work, the economic impact of medical research should not be underestimated. NIH research dollars not only impact research facilities and researchers, but they also help get new drugs and devices to market. Through these funds, we've established a strong relationship between NIH and Kentucky. The Markey Cancer Center, a National Cancer Institute-designated Cancer Center at the University of Kentucky, and the UK Center for Clinical and Translational Science, continue to perform transformative research benefitting the entire region. We look forward to continuing our work together to bring an end to these devastating diseases.

That being said, funding towards that goal must to come through regular discretionary channels that allow us to respond to needs as they arise. I am disappointed to see this request cuts NIH discretionary funding by \$1 billion, including \$57 million from the National Institute on Drug

Abuse (NIDA), and then backfills the hole with over \$1.8 billion in mandatory money. However, I look forward to meeting NIH requirements through the regular appropriations process.

I am pleased to see Dr. Nora Volkow with us once again this year. Dr. Volkow has been a champion for advancing the science of drug abuse and addiction as the Director of the National Institute of Drug Abuse for 13 years now. Beyond her personal expertise in cutting-edge brain imaging, she has been with us since the beginning of our battle against drug abuse in southern and eastern Kentucky. I am anxious to hear about your recent efforts regarding the abuse of prescription medications. As you well know, this epidemic now runs rampant across our nation. I hope you will update the committee on your work with pharmaceutical companies to evaluate the risks associated with the long-term use of opioids and what NIH is doing to research abuse-deterrent medications and opioid alternatives. I am also pleased that you have both once again committed to sharing these insights at the National Rx Summit in Atlanta in a few weeks.

Secondly, I look forward to hearing from you today about your pursuit of the Adolescent Brain Cognitive Development (ABCD) study. I believe collecting extensive data on the effects of marijuana and other drugs on a young person's brain will help us finally appreciate the harm these substances can do over time. Federal law is clear, yet states continue to rush decriminalize or legalize marijuana despite the lack of sufficient scientific data about its use. This study will help close that gap and hopefully shift public perception back to reality.

Thank you to this esteemed panel, and I look forward to hearing your testimony. Thank you, Mr. Chairman, and I yield back.

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