

SUPPORT A 5% FUNDING INCREASE FOR NIH

Position: The National MS Society believes the federal government must support the vital work of the NIH and adequately invest in biomedical research to enhance the health and welfare of all Americans. **The Society joins with the patient community and medical and research organizations in a collective request to Congress for a 5% funding increase for NIH in Fiscal Year (FY) 2007.**

Issue: Since the five year doubling campaign ended in 2003, funding for NIH has actually declined each year after taking into account inflation rates reflected in the Biomedical Research and Development Price Index (BRDPI) as calculated by NIH.

	NIH Funding	BRDPI	Net Change from Previous Year
2004	\$27.9 billion	3.6%	-0.5%
2005	\$28.4 billion	5.5%	-3.5%
2006	\$28.6 billion	4.1	-4.6% ¹
2007(proposed)	\$28.6 billion	3.8%	-3.8%

The federal government plays a critical role in furthering the scientific understanding of chronic diseases, and a 5% NIH increase in FY'07 is needed to:

- Assure NIH will instigate new biomedical research projects that will benefit MS and other chronic diseases
- Maintain the preeminence of the U.S. biotechnology and pharmaceutical industries
- Ensure the continuation of ongoing research projects
- Cover the cost of inflation (3.8%) and make a modest 1.2% investment in new research

As for the investment in MS research at NIH, the Society is gravely concerned that the current annual NIH investment in MS research of \$110 million is projected to *drop* by \$1 million in 2007 and another \$1 million in 2008. This amount pales in comparison with the \$23 billion annual cost of MS in the U.S.,² and the comparison demonstrates the clear need to increase MS research at NIH.

Any effort to conquer MS will require the collective efforts of many individuals as well as private and public organizations. **In the past, NIH discoveries have paved the way for biotech and pharmaceutical companies' development of the four existing treatments for MS, as well as more than a dozen drugs for MS in various stages of clinical testing.** Despite these significant achievements, the number of new drug applications to the Food and Drug Administration continues

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¹ This figure is after the 1% across the board budget cut, NIH funding in 2006 was \$28.3 billion, a 0.5% decrease.

² Based on a 1994 Duke University study, indexed for 2004 by the National MS Society, the average annual direct and indirect cost of MS is estimated at \$57,500 per person due to lost wages, increased medical care and other expenses. Nationwide, there are an estimated 400,000 people with MS.

to decline. The Society fears that this negative trend will be accelerated by continued reductions in NIH-funded research.

The federal government is a critical partner in the fight against MS and must continue its vital role in furthering the scientific understanding of MS. To this end, the Society supports the following research goals:

- **There is a great need to determine how many Americans have MS.** We therefore ask that the National Institutes of Health (NIH) collaborate with the Centers for Disease Control/Agency for Toxic Substances and Disease Registry (CDC/ASTDR), the Society and other MS organizations to begin the task of establishing the incidence and prevalence of MS.
- **There is a great need to find treatments for the primary-progressive MS, the most serious form of MS.** We therefore ask that NIH bring additional research focus to the primary-progressive form of MS.
- **There is a great need to develop laboratory tests to help physicians easily diagnose and monitor MS.** We therefore ask that NIH expand its efforts to identify biomarkers for MS.
- **There is a great need to research the effects of rehabilitation services on Americans with MS.** We therefore urge that the National Institute on Disability and Rehabilitation Research (NIDRR) in the Department of Education fund one additional Medical Rehabilitation Research and Training Center for MS and take steps to stimulate individual research projects in MS.

Since its inception in 1946, the Society's highest priority has been to end the devastating effects of MS by supporting research aimed at finding the cause of MS, providing better treatments, and ultimately discovering a cure. In 2006, the National MS Society will spend over \$40 million on MS research supporting over 350 MS investigations. **By the end of 2006, the Society cumulatively will have expended some \$500 million since awarding its first three grants in 1947.** This represents the largest privately funded program of basic, clinical, and applied research and training related to MS in the world.

The surest path to discovering treatments for MS, and for human diseases in general, is to sustain the country's investment in innovative biomedical research. Funding cuts threaten these efforts, and will invariably harm the country's research infrastructure.