



Association of
American Medical Colleges
655 K Street, N.W., Suite 100, Washington, D.C. 20001-2399
T 202 828 0400
www.aamc.org

July 9, 2015

Dear Representative:

The Association of American Medical Colleges is deeply concerned by Amendment No. 29 to the 21st Century Cures Act (H.R. 6) offered by Representatives Dave Brat, Tom McClintock, Scott Garrett, and Marlin Stutzman. If adopted, this amendment would make the Cures Innovation Fund to support the National Institutes of Health (NIH) and the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) discretionary, instead of mandatory. If discretionary, the Cures Innovation Fund would further divert funding for other critical discretionary health programs and activities making it even more difficult to meet America's growing health challenges in this era of austerity. The AAMC urges you to vote no when this amendment comes to the House floor.

The AAMC is a not-for-profit association representing all 144 accredited U.S. allopathic medical schools, 400 major teaching hospitals and health systems, including 51 Department of Veterans Affairs medical centers, and 90 academic and scientific societies. Through these institutions and organizations, the AAMC represents 148,000 faculty members, 83,000 medical students, 115,000 resident physicians, and thousands of graduate students and post-doctoral trainees in the biomedical sciences.

The fiscal year (FY) 2016 allocation for the Labor, Health and Human Services, Education and Related Agencies Subcommittee is 2.4 percent (\$3.7 billion) less than the FY 2015 level. In addition, the programs and services funding by the "Labor-H" subcommittee have been cut by 12 percent (\$21 billion) since FY 2010, adjusted for inflation.

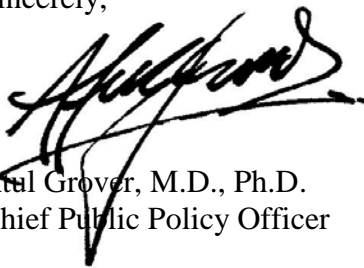
The draconian tradeoffs required by these cuts are evident in the appropriations bills now consideration. Discretionary increases to NIH in both the House and Senate Labor-HHS bill have necessitated deep cuts to other important health programs. For example, a \$1.1 billion increase provided to NIH in the House necessitated the termination of the Agency for Health Care Research and Quality (AHRQ), the elimination of women's preventive health services, and deep cuts to the health care workforce training. A \$2 billion increase for NIH in the Senate required deep cuts to AHRQ, community health centers, disability programs, women's preventive health services, and programs to prevent chronic diseases that are the leading causes of death in America.

The AAMC supports the creation of the NIH Innovation Fund, which is fully offset and retains the critical role of the Appropriations Committee to determine the specific biomedical spending priorities through the regular appropriations process each year of its five-year life. Moreover, while the 21st Century Cures Act includes five years of targeted, offset investments in health research and innovation, the bill also includes permanent entitlement changes that will yield billions in savings within CBO's scoring window. These entitlement changes will lead to billions in additional savings in Medicare and Medicaid in the second decade and beyond – real savings that are not quantified by CBO, but will help stabilize and strengthen our long-term fiscal

outlook. According to CBO, the bill will reduce the deficit by more than \$500 million over the first decade.

Medical research is a critical function of the federal government, and investments in NIH help discover cures for patients and strengthen the economy. But without a strong health workforce to treat patients, evidence about how to optimally deliver cures to patients, services that enhance patient's access to these cures, and programs that prevent disease and disability, the cures developed by NIH will fall short of their promise to improve and protect the health of all Americans. Making the Cures Innovation Fund discretionary and under the already austere, sequestered spending caps would further undermine programs that help patients get the most of new discoveries and provide necessary support while Americans await new cures. Harming patients in such a way is exactly the opposite of the intended goals of 21st Century Cures Act.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Atul Grover". The signature is stylized and fluid, with a long horizontal stroke extending to the right.

Atul Grover, M.D., Ph.D.
Chief Public Policy Officer