



THE AD HOC GROUP FOR MEDICAL RESEARCH

For immediate release

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Ad Hoc Group Decries President's FY 2009 NIH Budget Proposal

Washington, DC, February 4, 2008 -- The Ad Hoc Group for Medical Research today criticized the Administration's FY 2009 proposal to freeze funding for the National Institutes of Health (NIH).

"The Administration's proposal to hold the NIH budget at last year's level is a decision to limit the discovery and innovation that are so critical to continuing the progress that today's scientists are making toward tomorrow's cures," said Ad Hoc Group Executive Director David Moore. "This budget implies that it is satisfactory if we have to wait for cures; however, for millions of Americans and their families, hope delayed is hope denied."

The Administration's request would provide \$29.2 billion for NIH in FY 2009, which represents the sixth consecutive year that the NIH budget has failed to keep pace with biomedical inflation. In the five years through 2008, a series of nominal increases and cuts has amounted to flat funding for NIH, and NIH has lost approximately 11% in purchasing power due to inflation. If the President's FY 2009 request becomes law, NIH will have lost one-seventh of its purchasing power due to inflation.¹

For FY 2009, the Ad Hoc Group has proposed \$31.1 billion for NIH, an increase of \$1.9 billion over the FY 2008 funding level.

The Administration's request for NIH reflects this loss of biomedical research capacity and emphasizes the importance of supporting young scientists and providing "bridge" or temporary funding to established investigators and their labs. "NIH is doing the best it can to cope with the ongoing funding crisis," Moore said. "It is imperative to our future

¹ http://officeofbudget.od.nih.gov/UI/GDP_FromGenBudget.htm

success to keep young scientists and new ideas in the pipeline because today's new investigator is tomorrow's innovator."

NIH's FY09 budget will fund 9700 (verify) new research grants, eliminate inflationary increases for ongoing research projects (verify), fund approximately 240 bridge awards for established investigators, and fund 1500 new scientists as they begin their research careers.

In a series of hearings slated to begin on March 5, House Appropriations Committee Chairman David Obey (D-WI) will reportedly focus on the contribution of NIH research to improving health care and reducing costs.

"Last night, millions of Americans watched the Super Bowl and, over the course of the NFL season, fans saw dozens of ads for drugs that are the direct result of NIH-supported research," said Patrick White of the Association of American Universities. "If the Administration and the American people understood the connection between today's NIH funding and tomorrow's cures and therapies, I'm sure they'd want to invest more."

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The Ad Hoc Group for Medical Research is a coalition of more than 300 patient and voluntary health groups, medical and scientific societies, academic and research organizations, and industry. The Ad Hoc Group has one mission: to enhance the federal investment in biomedical, behavioral, and population-based research by increasing the funding for the National Institutes of Health.