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Related Agencies
Addressing: Department of Health and Human Services

The American College of Cardiology (ACC) commends Congress for boosting funding for the National Institutes of Health (NIH) and Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) in FY16 and FY17, and mandatory increases for the NIH as part of the 21st Century Cures Act to spur the development and implementation of medical innovations. To ensure future medical research advancements in FY18 and beyond, ACC urges members of Congress to appropriate the following funds towards agencies doing vital work in cardiovascular disease (CVD) treatment and prevention: \$36 billion for the NIH, with \$3.4 billion going towards the National Heart Lung & Blood Institute (NHLBI) and \$1.9 billion towards the National Institute of Neurological Disorders & Stroke (NINDS) to increase the NIH's purchasing power and preserve U.S. leadership in research; \$175 million towards the CDC's Division for Heart Disease and Stroke Prevention to strengthen heart disease prevention efforts at state and local levels, \$5 million towards CDC's Million Hearts to prevent 1 million heart attacks and strokes by 2022, \$37 million towards CDC's WISEWOMAN to help uninsured or under-insured women prevent or control heart disease, \$7 million towards CDC congenital heart research to study its effects over the lifespan, and \$210 million towards CDC's Office on Smoking and Health to maintain the program's cost-effective tobacco control efforts.

The ACC is a 52,000-member medical society that is the professional home for the entire cardiovascular care team. The mission of the College is to transform cardiovascular care and improve heart health. The ACC leads in the formation of health policy, standards and guidelines. The College operates national registries to measure and improve care, provides professional medical education, promotes cardiovascular research and bestows credentials on cardiovascular specialists who meet stringent qualifications. The Journal of the American College of Cardiology (JACC), which publishes peer-reviewed research on all aspects of cardiovascular disease, is the most widely read cardiovascular journal worldwide. JACC is ranked number one among cardiovascular journals worldwide for its scientific impact.

Increase Funding at the National Institutes of Health

CVD, a class of diseases that includes diseased blood vessels, structural problems, and blood clots, continues to be the leading cause of death among men and women in the country and responsible for 1 in every 4 deaths¹. More than 92 million Americans currently suffer from some form of CVD but it remains one of the most underfunded deadly diseases, as the NIH only invests 4 percent of its research dollars on heart research². **Since many heart disease-related,**

¹ [Heart Disease Facts](https://www.cdc.gov/heartdisease/facts.htm); Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. <https://www.cdc.gov/heartdisease/facts.htm>

² [Research Funding for Cardiovascular Disease Facts](https://www.heart.org/idc/groups/heart-public/@wcm/@adv/documents/downloadable/ucm_474109.pdf); American Heart Association.

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life-saving interventions are a result of sustained commitment to investments in medical research, we recommend the NIH be funded at \$36 billion.

The NHLBI, the third-largest institute at the NIH, conducts research related to heart, blood vessel, lung, and blood diseases, generating drugs for lowering cholesterol, controlling blood pressure, and lysing blood clots. These biomedical advancements have contributed to a 71 percent³ decrease in death rates due to cardiovascular disease. **We recommend that NHLBI be funded at \$3.4 billion to maintain current activities and investment towards new research and emerging technologies related to heart disease.**

NINDS conducts research on brain and nervous system disorders, including stroke prevention and treatment. Coronary heart disease and stroke share many of the same risk factors such as high cholesterol levels, high blood pressure, smoking, diabetes, and obesity. The NINDS Stroke Clinical Trials Network develops high-quality, multi-site clinical trials focused on key interventions in stroke prevention, treatment and recovery. **We recommend that NINDS be funded at \$1.9 billion to enhance its existing initiatives and explore new priorities in stroke prevention.**

Increase Funding at the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention

The CDC plays a vital role in protecting public health through healthy lifestyle promotion and educational activities designed to curb non-infectious diseases such as obesity, diabetes, stroke, and heart disease. The CDC Division for Heart Disease and Stroke Prevention supports efforts to improve cardiovascular health by promoting healthy lifestyles and behaviors, healthy environments, and access to early treatment and affordable detection. **We recommend that the CDC Division for Heart Disease and Stroke prevention be funded at \$175 million to continue its prevention activities among the most vulnerable communities.**

Launched in 2012 and co-led by the CDC and Center for Medicare and Medicaid Services, the Million Hearts program coordinates and enhances CVD prevention activities with the objective of preventing 1 million heart attacks and strokes by the year 2022. The initiative aims to achieve this goal by encouraging the public to lead a healthy and active lifestyle, as well as improving medication adherence for aspirin and other medications to manage blood pressure, cholesterol, and smoking cessation. **We recommend that Million Hearts be funded at \$5 million to enhance efforts preventing heart attacks and strokes.**

CDC's WISEWOMAN initiative provides more than 165,000 under-insured, low-income women ages 40-64 with services to help reduce heart disease and stroke risk factors. Heart disease ranks as the leading cause of death for women. **We recommend that \$37 million be allocated for WISEWOMAN to provide preventative health services, referrals to local health care providers, lifestyle programs, and counseling.**

Congenital heart disease (CHD), a life-long consequence of a structural abnormality of the heart present at birth, is the No. 1 birth defect in the U.S. Most patients with complex heart

³, [HHS/NIH/NHLBI FY2017 Congressional Justification Report](https://www.nhlbi.nih.gov/sites/www.nhlbi.nih.gov/files/Final%20NHLBI%202017%20CJ_R508_v1.pdf);

https://www.nhlbi.nih.gov/sites/www.nhlbi.nih.gov/files/Final%20NHLBI%202017%20CJ_R508_v1.pdf

defects need special care throughout their lives, and only by expanding research opportunities can we fully understand the effects of CHD across the lifespan. **We recommend that the CDC National Center for Birth Defects and Developmental Disabilities be funded at \$7 million for enhanced CHD surveillance and public health research.**

Programs within CDC's Office on Smoking and Health (OSH) work to prevent smoking among young adults and eliminate tobacco-related health disparities in different population groups. The national tobacco education campaign, Tips from Former Smokers, has motivated more than 5 million⁴ people to quit smoking, and at least 400,000 quit for good. **We recommend that OSH be funded at \$210 million to continue leading the nation's efforts in preventing chronic diseases caused by tobacco use.**

Conclusion

On behalf of our 52,000 members who work to prevent and treat CVD, ACC would like to thank members of Congress for supporting medical innovation as we continue the fight against heart disease. Stable funding for research, surveillance, and healthy lifestyle promotion will not only save lives, but save health care costs in the long term. Medical research nurtures economic growth by creating jobs and new technologies, which will produce billions of dollars in Medicare and Medicaid savings over the next decade. Please help us secure robust NIH and CDC funding to protect the health of future generations.

⁴ Office on Smoking and Health; Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.
<https://www.cdc.gov/tobacco/about/osh/>