



ASN Urges Congress to Provide:

Sustained Research Support to Ensure Patients Receive the Best—and Most Affordable—Care

ASN urges Congress to support robust, sustained funding for biomedical research in the United States. As both chambers consider health reform legislation that encourages prevention and wellness, improves quality of care, and reduces medical errors, ASN reminds legislators that the only way to identify better ways to stave off disease and streamline care is through research:

- The application of discoveries in genetics and genomics, including pharmacogenomics, may allow physicians to personalize therapy and improve outcomes.
- Comparative effectiveness research will identify the best drugs and treatments for specific diseases and patient groups.

Dedicated Research Funding to Address the Growing Impact of Kidney Disease on Public Health

ASN urges Congress to provide the National Institutes of Diabetes and Digestive and Kidney Diseases (NIDDK) with increases commensurate with overall growth for NIH in fiscal year (FY) 2010, with particular attention directed at:

- Basic research on the major causes of kidney disease, including diabetes, hypertension, aging, and obesity. Bench research is essential for the development of new treatments and management strategies for kidney disease patients.
- Studies that consider appropriate and effective therapies to improve disheartening mortality statistics in patients with kidney disease, including those treated for kidney failure by dialysis.

ASN appreciates President Barack Obama's dedication—as outlined in his initial budget outline—to double cancer research funding over 10 years. However, the Society urges Congress to recognize that cancer is but one disease impacting the American people. ASN urges requisite increases to prevent the alarming impact kidney disease has on patients, families, and taxpayers.

Robust Funding for Research, Training, and Infrastructure at the National Institutes of Health (NIH)

ASN urges a modest inflationary increase—based on the \$40 billion base established under the American Recovery and Reinvestment Bill—for NIH in FY 2010. While the Society appreciates the \$10 billion increase provided under the stimulus package, the experience of the past two decades demonstrates the problems caused by cyclical periods of rapid funding growth followed by periods of stagnation. In addition to supporting innovative, investigator-initiated research, ASN urges Congress to support key NIH programs that are instrumental to the success of the agency and its investigator workforce:

- Expand the loan repayment program to include physician-scientists engaged in all forms of disease-oriented research; exorbitant medical school debt often deters physicians from entering the research pathway.
- Provide sustained support for training and mentored research to encourage the next generation of investigators to remain in the research pipeline.
- Increase support for research in health care disparities with increased attention on the role of biologic and non-biologic factors in creating disparities as well as support for underrepresented minority investigators.
- Implement necessary infrastructure for disease-specific registries and clinical trials networks to better allow investigators to bridge the gap from the bench to the bedside.

Necessary Increases to the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) Medical and Prosthetic Research Program

ASN urges Congress to increase funding to \$575 million for VA research in FY 2010. This \$65 million increase in funding will allow the program to keep pace with inflation as well as provide support for new programs that address the treatment needs of soldiers returning from Iraq and Afghanistan, advance efforts in genomics research, and maintain support for research in chronic diseases and the aging population. ASN also recommends Congress provide a \$142 million set-aside for necessary VA research infrastructure improvements that have been ignored for years due to internal competition for funds.

For more information about ASN or kidney disease, visit www.asn-online.org or call 202-659-0599.

