Dear Chairmen Harkin and Rehberg and Ranking Members Shelby and DeLauro:

The undersigned organizations and institutions, representing the nation’s research institutions, researchers, physician-scientists, and patients, thank you and your subcommittees for your continued support of the National Institutes of Health (NIH), which has resulted in immense benefits for the health of the American people. As you begin consideration of the Fiscal Year 2013 Labor, Health and Human Services, and Education, and Related Agencies Appropriations bill, we bring to your attention an issue of particular importance. Specifically, we urge you to restore the salary limit imposed on extramural NIH researchers to Level I of the Executive pay scale.

Division F, Section 203 of the Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2012 (P.L. 112-74) reduced the salary limit to Executive Level II and extended it to all HHS funding agencies. This change represents a cut of $20,000 (10 percent), and comes at a time when research institutions’ discretionary funds from clinical revenues and other sources are increasingly constrained and less available to invest in research. As institutions and departments divert funds to compensate for the reduction in the salary limit, they will have less funding for critical activities such as providing bridge funding to investigators who may be between grants, and to provide seed grants and start-up packages for young investigators.

A high priority for the nation’s medical research effort, affirmed by the Congress, is strengthening clinical and translational research. The dynamic health needs of the nation call for ensuring the recruitment and retention of the nation’s most talented and productive group of investigators including Ph.D. trained scientists and physician scientists. The extramural salary limit particularly disadvantages the most productive investigators, who likely dedicate the majority of their time in research and who have a sustained track record in breakthrough discoveries, and will have a chilling effect on gifted new investigators. Moreover, it disproportionately affects physician investigators and serves as a deterrent to their recruitment
into research careers at a time when the United States is committed to improving the health of the nation and remaining globally competitive in research and technology. Since the Federal government imposed the salary cap on extramural researchers in 1990, medical schools and teaching hospitals have been increasingly forced to bear more of the costs of physician-scientists' and other investigators' salaries.

It is essential to our nation’s long-term health and standing in the global environment that we not disincentivize research careers and that we adopt policies to ensure that America retains the most talented, productive, and diverse group of biomedical and behavioral researchers. Medical research continues to produce major breakthroughs in the search for cures and treatments to a wide array of diseases and disorders. This is not the time to step back.

Restoring the extramural salary limit to Executive Level I will allow our institutions to continue to attract and retain the best investigators in our research programs. We urge you to restore the salary limit to Executive Level I when you consider the FY 2013 Labor-HHS appropriation.

Sincerely,

Academy of Radiology Research
AIDS Action Baltimore
AIDS Treatment Activists Coalition
Albert Einstein College of Medicine of Yeshiva University
American Academy of Allergy, Asthma and Immunology
American Association for the Study of Liver Diseases
American Association of Colleges of Nursing
American Association of Colleges of Pharmacy
American Gastroenterological Association
American Pediatric Society
American Psychiatric Association
American Society for Gastrointestinal Endoscopy
The American Society for Microbiology
American Society for Reproductive Medicine
American Society of Hematology
American Society of Nephrology
American Statistical Association
American Thoracic Society
Associated Medical Schools of New York (AMSNY)
Association for Clinical Research Training
Association for Patient-Oriented Research
Association for Research in Vision and Ophthalmology (ARVO)
Association of Academic Health Centers
Association of Academic Health Sciences Libraries
Association of American Cancer Institutes
Association of American Medical Colleges
Association of American Universities
Association of American Veterinary Medical Colleges
Association of Departments of Family Medicine
Association of Family Medicine Residency Directors
The Association of Independent Research Institutes (AIRI)
Association of Minority Health Professions Schools
Association of Public and Land-grant Universities (APLU)
Baylor College of Medicine
Beaumont Health System
Beth Israel Deaconess Medical Center in Boston, MA
Boonshoft School of Medicine
Boston University School of Medicine
Brigham and Women's Hospital, Boston, MA
Brown University
CADASIL Together We Hope Nonprofits
Case Western Reserve University
Cedars-Sinai Medical Center
Charles R. Drew University
The Children’s Hospital of Philadelphia Research Institute
Clinical Research Forum
Coalition of Heritable Disorders of Connective Tissue
Columbia University
Cooper Medical School of Rowan University
Council on Governmental Relations
Cornell University
Creighton University
Crohn’s and Colitis Foundation of America
Dana-Farber Cancer Institute
Digestive Disease National Coalition
Duke University School of Medicine
Eastern Virginia Medical School
Emory University
Genetic Alliance
Hereditary Leiomyoma and Renal Cell Cancer Family Alliance (HLRCCFA)
H. Lee Moffitt Cancer Center & Research Institute
Indiana University
Infectious Diseases Society of America
International Essential Tremor Foundation
International Foundation for Functional Gastrointestinal Disorders
International WAGR Syndrome Association
Interstitial Cystitis Association
Johns Hopkins University
Kids With Heart National Association for Children's Heart Disorders, Inc
Le Bonheur Children's Hospital
Loyola University Chicago Stritch School of Medicine
The Lupus Research Institute
Marshall University
Maryland Hepatitis Coalition
Massachusetts General Hospital
Mayo Clinic
Medical College of Georgia at Georgia Health Sciences University
Medical Library Association
UC Riverside
UC San Diego
UC San Francisco
UC Santa Barbara
UC Santa Cruz
Universidad Central del Caribe
University at Buffalo
University of Alabama at Birmingham
University of Arkansas for Medical Sciences
University of California System
University of Cincinnati College of Medicine
University of Colorado Anschutz Medical Campus
University of Connecticut School of Medicine
University of Illinois
University of Kansas School of Medicine – Wichita
University of Louisville
University of Maryland School of Medicine
University of Massachusetts Medical School
The University of Michigan Medical School
University of Minnesota
University of Missouri-Kansas City School of Medicine
University of Missouri School of Medicine
University of Nebraska Medical Center College of Medicine
The University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill
University of Oklahoma College of Medicine
University of Pittsburgh
University of Rochester
University of Texas Health Science Center at Houston
University of Texas Medical Branch at Galveston
University of Texas System
University of Utah Health Sciences
University of Vermont College of Medicine
University of Washington
University of Wisconsin-Madison
US Hereditary Angioedema Association
Vanderbilt University
VHL Family Alliance
Virginia Commonwealth University
Washington University in St. Louis
Yale School of Medicine