



American Institute for Cancer Research
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July 16, 2021

Congresswoman Diana DeGette
U.S. House of Representatives
2111 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Congressman Fred Upton
U.S. House of Representatives
2183 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

RE: Response to CURES 2.0 ARPA-H RFI

Dear Representatives DeGette and Upton:

The [American Institute for Cancer Research \(AICR\)](#) appreciates your leadership in introducing legislation to authorize the creation of the Advanced Research Projects Agency for Health (ARPA-H). AICR is the leading U.S. authority on the connection between healthy lifestyles and cancer prevention and survivorship. In collaboration with our sister organization, the World Cancer Research Fund International (WCRF), AICR's [Continuous Update Project](#) has conducted a comprehensive review of the evidence on how diet, physical activity, and weight impact cancer prevention and survival.

AICR is pleased to submit the following recommendations in response to the CURES 2.0 Request for Information (RFI):

ARPA-H Priorities

ARPA-H should address innovation across the disease spectrum from cancer prevention through treatment.

[Research](#) has found that about 40 percent of cancer cases and cancer deaths are preventable. For the 80 percent of adults who do not use tobacco products, the [greatest modifiable cancer risk factors](#) are poor diet, physical inactivity, alcohol use, and excess body weight. However, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), [42 percent of U.S. adults](#) and [19 percent of U.S. children](#) have obesity. Obesity rates among some racial/ethnic groups are as high as 50 percent for adults and 25 percent for children.

Cancer is one of our nation's most costly chronic health conditions. According to the American Cancer Society Cancer Action Network, U.S. cancer costs totaled approximately [\\$183 billion](#) in 2015 and are projected to grow to \$246 billion by 2030. Given the potential for ARPA-H to fund transformational research in cancer space, we strongly recommend that a portion of the funds be used to address cancer prevention and survivorship through healthy lifestyle. While investments in disease treatments are important for improving outcomes for people with cancer, reducing the number of people who have cancer in the first place is truly the most impactful and cost-effective way to save lives and reduce health care costs long-term.

We appreciate that President Biden's April 28, 2021 address to Congress that discussed the creation of ARPA-H and the [White House's ARPA-H concept paper](#) acknowledge the importance of cancer prevention. However, Section 501 of the Cures 2.0 bill that is focused on ARPA-H makes no mention of prevention of cancer or other debilitating and costly diseases. We strongly recommend that Cures 2.0

provides for ARPA-H to address innovation across the disease spectrum from cancer prevention through treatment.

ARPA-H Funding

Funding for ARPA-H should be both sufficiently substantial and sustainable over time to truly transform the biomedical ecosystem. However, ARPA-H funding should neither subtract from existing NIH funding nor prevent robust, annual increases—no less than the rate of biomedical inflation—for the NCI and other core NIH research programs.

AICR stands with much of cancer and biomedical research advocacy community in appreciation of President Biden's and Congress' interests in increasing investment in cancer research through ARPA-H. To that end, we recommend that funding for ARPA-H be both sufficiently substantial and sustainable over time to transform the biomedical ecosystem. However, AICR also advocates for sufficient, sustained funding for more traditional biomedical research through the National Institutes of Health (NIH) and the National Cancer Institute (NCI). Robust annual funding increases of no less than the rate of biomedical inflation are needed to continue to fund scientific breakthroughs that improve health and quality of life across the U.S. and the world. Funding increases also incentivize promising young investigators to enter and remain in the field. Given that ARPA-H and NCI will fund different types of cancer research, ensuring sufficient, sustained funding for both entities is essential.

RISE Act

Provide funding to restart medical research impacted by COVID-19.

AICR appreciates that Cures 2.0 includes \$25 billion for Research Investment to Spark the Economy (RISE Act). AICR recognizes the deleterious impact that COVID-19 has had on the biomedical research infrastructure and has previously endorsed the RISE Act. We urge the provision of this emergency supplemental funding to offset COVID-19-related research delays, interruptions, and disruptions.

Conclusion

In conclusion, we thank you again for your leadership and for your consideration of our recommendations. We wish to serve as a resource to you and your staff. More information about AICR's cancer research-related policy recommendations is available on our [website](#). Please also feel free to contact AICR's public policy consultant, Melissa Maitin-Shepard, MPP, at MMSHealthStrategies@gmail.com if you have any questions or we can provide any additional information.

Sincerely,



Deirdre McGinley-Gieser
Executive Vice President
American Institute for Cancer Research