

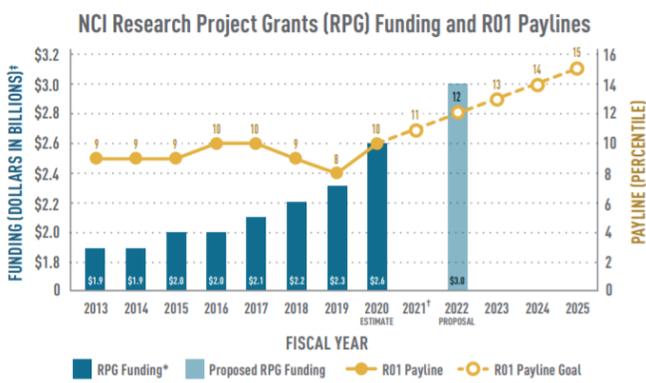
## AICR's Federal Priorities: Cancer Research Funding

### Background

As one of the largest funders in the field of lifestyle and cancer, the American Institute for Cancer Research (AICR) has dedicated nearly \$110 million to exploring the link between diet, obesity, physical activity and cancer prevention and survivorship. While the research we fund is the backbone of our organization, we also recognize the pivotal role that public research institutions play in our understanding of cancer. It is important that robust cancer research funding be made available so that progress continues and young investigators are incentivized to enter the field.

### Federal Funding

The National Institutes of Health (NIH) is the largest single funder of biomedical research in the world, and serves as a catalyst for scientific breakthroughs that have improved health and quality of life for millions of Americans.<sup>1</sup> In FY 2021, Congress invested \$42.9 billion in biomedical research at NIH, with more than \$6.56 billion going to the National Cancer Institute (NCI).<sup>2</sup> The NIH has seen a \$10 billion increase to its budget over the past five years,<sup>3</sup> leading to major advances in public health and healthcare. People are living longer and chronic diseases, such as cardiovascular disease, diabetes and cancer are less deadly.<sup>4</sup>



\* RPG funding levels exclude small business grant set-asides.

<sup>†</sup> At the time of publication, FY 2021 appropriations had not been finalized.

<sup>‡</sup> The left scale displaying RPG funding does not represent the actual future RPG funding needed to achieve the future payline percentiles on the right scale.

NCI is the largest of the 27 entities that make up the NIH and is the largest funder of cancer research in the world.<sup>5</sup> Due in part to continued investment in cancer research, cancer death rates declined 31 percent from 1991 to 2018.<sup>6</sup> This means that more than 3 million fewer people died from cancer between 1991 and 2018, largely driven by progress against lung, colorectal, breast, and prostate cancers.<sup>7</sup>

Despite this progress, cancer remains the second leading cause of death in the United States, showing how much work remains in the field of cancer research.<sup>8</sup> In addition, delays in seeking care due to COVID-19 are

likely to result in higher cancer rates in the years to come.<sup>9</sup> Temporary lab shutdowns due to COVID-19 and a switch to virtual research, in some cases, have also been costly. This data underlines the importance of having regular funding for NIH and NCI that increases each year to sustain and propel innovations in cancer research. Emergency funding is also needed to offset COVID-19-related research delays, interruptions, and disruptions.

Increased investment in NCI is also needed to address the significant increase in research grant applications submitted in recent years. Between FY2013 and FY2019, NCI R01 basic research grant applications increased more than 50 percent,<sup>10</sup> but funding did not keep pace, resulting in a 12.3 percent success rate for R01 research applications at NCI in FY 2020, lower than most other institutes and centers at NIH.<sup>11</sup> However, the most recent increases in funding for NCI has allowed NCI to increase its payline for competitive R01 research grants by 35 percent between FY2019 and FY2021, making progress towards its goal of achieving a 15 percent payline by FY2025.<sup>12</sup> The success rate for early career investigators has also increased in the past two fiscal years due to increases in funding.<sup>13</sup> Early-career investigators are the future of biomedical research in the United States, and investing in them is the only way to ensure continued progress in medical innovations.

## Policy Recommendations and Approach

In order to continue moving cancer research forward and fund research focused on the prevention of cancer, AICR has partnered with other cancer and health-focused organizations to advocate for an increase in funding for the NIH and NCI. [One Voice Against Cancer](#) is a coalition of more than 40 national organizations that have joined together with the common purpose of securing more federal funding for cancer research. AICR has been an active member of OVAC since December 2019, lending our voice and unique perspective on cancer prevention to this cause. AICR is also part of the [Ad Hoc Group for Medical Research](#), a coalition of more than 330 organizations that advocates for maintaining and increasing biomedical research funding. As part of both coalitions, we have been able to provide a more powerful voice on the need for cancer research funding.



Source: One Voice Against Cancer

For FY 2022, AICR is advocating for a \$46.4 billion in overall appropriations for NIH, a \$3.5 billion increase over current NIH funding, including \$7.609 billion for NCI. This NIH funding request reflects the House-passed bill, is consistent across the biomedical research community, and represents a 5 percent increase in funding over FY 2021 appropriations, plus an adjustment for biomedical inflation. The NCI funding request is the amount included in the NCI's FY2022 professional judgement budget.<sup>14</sup> AICR also advocates for \$10 billion in emergency supplemental funding to offset COVID-19-related research delays, interruptions, and disruptions.

President Joe Biden's FY 2022 budget proposal includes \$6.5 billion over three years for a new Advanced Research Projects Agency-Health (ARPA-H) initiative, focused on expediting research translation on cancer and other conditions. AICR is pleased to see the President's commitment to investment in cancer research and looks forward to learning more about the ARPA-H proposal. However, investment in ARPA-H should not come at the expense of NCI appropriations. AICR also advocates that a significant portion of funds available for cancer research and dissemination be dedicated to research on the impact of lifestyle factors on cancer prevention and survivorship.

## Conclusion

Innovations in how we diagnose, treat, prevent and survive cancer can be traced to research funded by the NIH and NCI.<sup>15</sup> Continued investment in this research is an investment in innovation, in the health of all Americans and in the economy. As a non-profit dedicated to funding the most cutting-edge research on cancer prevention and survivorship, we know that the best way to continue the positive trends are to increase federal funding to both NIH and NCI. To learn more about AICR's commitment to protecting and strengthening federal funding for cancer research, visit our website <https://www.aicr.org/impact/policy-advocacy> or email [advocacy@aicr.org](mailto:advocacy@aicr.org).

<sup>1</sup> NIH. "Impact of NIH research." n.d. Available at <https://www.nih.gov/about-nih/what-we-do/impact-nih-research>.

<sup>2</sup> NCI. "NCI Budget and Appropriations." Updated January 13, 2021. Available at <https://www.cancer.gov/about-nci/budget#current-year>.

<sup>3</sup> Congressional Research Service. "National Institutes of Health Funding: FY1994-FY2020." Updated May 12, 2020. Available at <https://fas.org/sqp/crs/misc/R43341.pdf>

<sup>4</sup> NIH. "Impact of NIH research." Updated February 21, 2020. Available at <https://www.nih.gov/about-nih/what-we-do/impact-nih-research/our-health>

<sup>5</sup> NCI. "National Cancer Institute overview and mission." Updated April 6, 2018. Available at <https://www.cancer.gov/about-nci/overview>

<sup>6</sup> American Cancer Society. "Cancer Facts and Figures 2021." January 2021. Available at <https://www.cancer.org/content/dam/cancer-org/research/cancer-facts-and-statistics/annual-cancer-facts-and-figures/2021/cancer-facts-and-figures-2021.pdf>.

<sup>7</sup> Ibid.

<sup>8</sup> World Health Organization. "Cancer fact sheet." September 2018. Available at <https://www.who.int/news-room/fact-sheets/detail/cancer>

<sup>9</sup> ACS, 2021.

<sup>10</sup> NCI. "NCI Professional Judgement Budget Proposal." August 31, 2020. <https://www.cancer.gov/research/annual-plan/budget-proposal>

<sup>11</sup> NIH. Table 205-C: "Research Project Grants and Other Mechanisms: Competing Applications, Awards, Success Rates and Total Funding. Fiscal Year 2020." Available at <https://report.nih.gov/funding/nih-budget-and-spending-data-past-fiscal-years/success-rates>.

<sup>12</sup> NCI. "Funding from Congress Allows NCI to Raise Grants Payline." February 4, 2021. Available at <https://www.cancer.gov/grants-training/nci-bottom-line-blog/2021/funding-from-congress-allows-nci-to-raise-grants-payline>.

<sup>13</sup> Ibid.

<sup>14</sup> NCI. "Annual Plan and Budget Proposal for Fiscal Year 2022: At a Glance." Available at <https://www.cancer.gov/research/annual-plan/2022-annual-plan-budget-proposal-aag.pdf>.

<sup>15</sup> NIH. "Impact of NIH research." Updated February 21, 2020. Available at <https://www.nih.gov/about-nih/what-we-do/impact-nih-research/our-health>.