

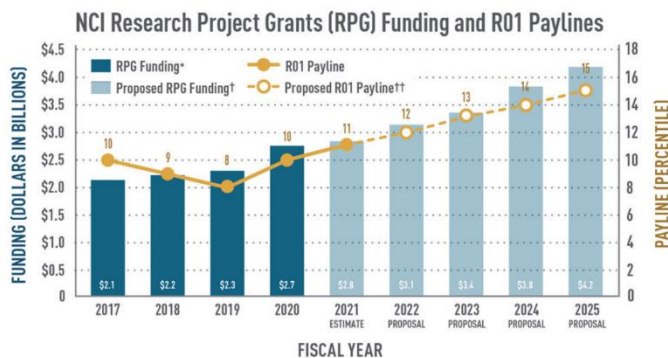
## AICR's Federal Priorities: Cancer Research Funding

### 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> For FY2022, Congress invested \$45 billion in biomedical research at NIH, with \$6.9 billion going to the National Cancer Institute (NCI).<sup>2</sup> The NIH has seen funding increases to its budget from 2016 to 2021,<sup>3</sup> leading to major advances in public health and healthcare. People are living longer, and chronic conditions, such as cancer, cardiovascular disease, and diabetes, are less deadly.<sup>4</sup>



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 32 percent from 1991 to 2019.<sup>6</sup> This means that more than 3.5 million fewer people died from cancer between 1991 and 2019, largely driven by progress against lung, colorectal, breast, and prostate cancers.<sup>7</sup>

\* RPG funding levels include program evaluation and Small Business Innovation Research.  
† FY 2021 reflects an estimate, and FY 2022 through FY 2025 are proposed professional judgment budget levels. Estimates beyond FY 2020 are subject to change due to unanticipated inflation rates, average cost increases, and fluctuations in application rates as the country recovers from the COVID-19 pandemic.  
‡ R01 paylines for FY 2022 through FY 2025 are proposed levels based on estimated funding levels included in this professional judgment budget.

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. A study from the American Association for Cancer Research found that 87% of cancer researchers reported decreased productivity due to the pandemic.<sup>10</sup> Regular, sustained funding increases for NIH and NCI are needed to propel innovations in cancer research.

Increased investment in NCI is also needed to address the significant increase in research grant applications submitted in recent years. Compared to the previous five years, the average number of R01 grant applications between FY2016 and FY2020 increased by 33%,<sup>11</sup> but funding did not keep pace, resulting in a 12.9 percent success rate for R01 research applications at NCI in FY2021, lower than most other institutes and centers at NIH.<sup>12</sup> However, the most recent increases in funding for NCI have 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>13</sup> The success rate for early career investigators has also increased in the past three fiscal years due to increases in funding.<sup>14</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 increase federal investment in cancer prevention and survivorship research, 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 50 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 reducing cancer risk through lifestyle to this cause. AICR is also part of the [Ad Hoc Group for Medical Research](#), a coalition of nearly 400 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 FY2023, AICR is advocating for \$49 billion in base appropriations for NIH, a \$4.1 billion increase over FY2022 NIH funding, including \$7.766 billion for NCI.** This NIH funding request is consistent across the biomedical research community and represents a \$3.5 billion increase in funding over FY2022 appropriations, plus funding from the 21<sup>st</sup> Century Cures Act. The NCI funding request is the amount included in the NCI's FY2023 professional judgement budget.<sup>15</sup>

AICR support addressing cancer through the Cancer Moonshot initiative and the new Advanced Research Projects Agency for Health (ARPA-H). The President Biden's FY2023 budget proposal includes \$5 billion for ARPA-H, focused on expediting research translation on cancer and other conditions. However, investment in ARPA-H should not come at the expense of base NIH or NCI appropriations. AICR also advocates that funds for both Cancer Moonshot and ARPA-H be dedicated to addressing 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>16</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 for 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).

*Updated April 2022*

<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 March 25, 2022. 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 March 25, 2022. 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 2022." April 2022. Available at <https://www.cancer.org/content/dam/cancer-org/research/cancer-facts-and-statistics/annual-cancer-facts-and-figures/2022/2022-cancer-facts-and-figures.pdf>

<sup>7</sup> Ibid.

<sup>8</sup> Ibid.

<sup>9</sup> Ibid.

<sup>10</sup> American Association for Cancer Research. "The AACR Report on the Impact of COVID-19 on Cancer Research and Patient Care." February 9, 2022. Available at [https://www.aacr.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/02/AACR\\_C19CR\\_2022.pdf](https://www.aacr.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/02/AACR_C19CR_2022.pdf).

<sup>11</sup> NCI. "Funding Patterns: Awards of R01 and R21 in FY 2020 – FY2011." Available at <https://qsspubssl.nci.nih.gov/blog/articles>.

<sup>12</sup> NIH. Table 205-C: "Research Project Grants and Other Mechanisms: Competing Applications, Awards, Success Rates and Funding, by Institute/Center, mechanism/funding source, and activity code." Available at <https://report.nih.gov/funding/nih-budget-and-spending-data-past-fiscal-years/success-rates>.

<sup>13</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>15</sup> NCI. "Annual Plan and Budget Proposal for Fiscal Year 2023: At a Glance." Available at <https://www.cancer.gov/research/annual-plan/2023-annual-plan-budget-proposal-aag.pdf>

<sup>16</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>.