

October X, 2022

The Honorable Patrick Leahy
Chair, Senate Committee on Appropriations
437 Russell Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Richard Shelby
Vice Chair, Senate Committee on Appropriations
304 Russell Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Rosa DeLauro
Chair, House Committee on Appropriations
2413 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Kay Granger
Ranking Member, House Committee on Appropriations
1026 Longworth HOB
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairman Leahy, Chairwoman DeLauro, Vice Chair Shelby, and Ranking Member Granger,

It was a pleasure to take part in the 2022 White House Conference on Hunger, Nutrition, and Health. Just as the 1969 Conference catapulted our nation's approach to food and nutrition forward, we know this year's Conference and the accompanying broad-based National Strategy can significantly enhance the U.S. food and nutrition policy landscape.

The National Institutes of Health (NIH) has a crucial role within this overall landscape; advancing nutrition research and science to tackle the causes and effects of diet-related disease. **To that end, we write to respectfully request that as the House and Senate complete work on Fiscal Year 2023 appropriations, at least \$97 million be allocated to the Office of Nutrition Research (ONR) within the NIH.**

The recent White House Conference highlighted the link between poor nutrition and poor health, leading to diet-related diseases, egregious health inequities, and exponentially higher healthcare spending. As illustrated by the fifth pillar of the White House Conference — enhance nutrition and food security research — there is a critical need for significant research funding to help better understand and address this devastating linkage.

The administration's FY2023 Budget Request proposed dedicating \$97 million to fund the Office of Nutrition Research, which was recently moved into the NIH Office of the Director (OD) to better coordinate and lead research functions across NIH institutes and centers. Funding at this level would enable the ONR to secure the leadership, organizational structure, and resources to effectively do its important work. This investment would expand and accelerate findings across numerous critical areas and positively impact public health, equity, the economy, national security, and the nation's resilience to new threats.

Specifically, this funding level will allow ONR and the NIH to establish a strong foundation and increased capacity to:

- Achieve scientific breakthroughs in the prevention and treatment of diet-related disease through a clearer understanding of how the foods and beverages we consume affect health
- Strengthen existing close communication and coordination with the NIH Director, other divisions and offices within the NIH Office of the Director, and nutrition activities across all the NIH institutes and centers
- Ensure successful implementation of the [2020-2030 Strategic Plan for NIH Nutrition Research](#) and [NIH Common Fund Precision Nutrition Initiative](#)
- Build and coordinate new and enhanced collaborative relationships and synergies within the NIH, with other federal departments and agencies (e.g., USDA, DOD, VA, CMS, CDC, FDA, etc.), and with external stakeholders — including public-private partnerships — to drive nutrition research and innovation
- Provide guidance on rigorous research methodology
- Develop and train the next generation of diverse scientists capable of addressing diet-related diseases and health disparities
- Increase the impact, visibility, dissemination, and practice and policy implementation of nutrition science findings
- Structure a more formalized approach to engage strong external advisory mechanisms and strengthen input from other federal departments and agencies, academic institutions, advocacy groups, state and local governments, community-based organizations, community members, and other stakeholders

As the National Strategy outlined, it is time we close the gap between our investment in nutrition research and the heavy toll that diet-related diseases exert on the nation. ONR not only coordinates nutrition research across the NIH, but also identifies research projects in nutrition science that individual institutes and centers should expand and support. This includes a focus on the relationship between nutrition and health disparities, nutrition across the lifespan, medical nutrition, precision nutrition and the human genome, behavioral interventions to improve nutrition, and much more. This investment would improve the health of the nation, making the country stronger and more competitive and reducing the heavy human and economic burden of chronic disease for all Americans.

We appreciate your consideration of this request to provide at least \$97 million in funding for the Office of Nutrition Research at the NIH.

Sincerely,

- The Gerald J. and Dorothy R. Friedman School of Nutrition Science and Policy, Tufts University
- *Insert FNAC members that sign on*

CC:

The Honorable Patty Murray, Chair, Senate Appropriations Subcommittee on Labor, Health and Human Services, Education and Related Agencies

The Honorable Roy Blunt, Ranking Member, Senate Appropriations Subcommittee on Labor, Health and Human Services, Education and Related Agencies

The Honorable Tom Cole, Ranking Member, House Appropriations Subcommittee on Labor, Health and Human Services, Education and Related Agencies