

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

SUMMER DOMINATED BY DEBT CEILING DEAL

I want to thank our members for their efforts this summer and prepare you all for a busy fall with the Alliances. The Alliances navigated a challenging political environment through the summer months and continued advocacy efforts with our partners to champion vision research and emphasize the vital work of the National Eye Institute (NEI). Our members' continued support has remained fundamental to advancing the Alliances' efforts.

Over the past few months, NAEVR has continued advocating for increased funding for the NEI. Our advocacy efforts have entailed meeting and submitting requests with every appropriations committee member, submitting testimony to the Labor Health and Human Services and Related Agencies Subcommittees, and submitting a sign-on letter with our partners. We've emphasized the need for increased support for vision research and highlighted how vision research is often leading efforts across medical science. We're working now on plans to elevate grassroots engagement with our members and stakeholders to help legislators better understand the far-reaching impact of NEI's work.

Even with these efforts, I would be remiss not to acknowledge the challenges that have emerged with the debt ceiling agreement. The deal reached in June inevitably cast a significant shadow on the federal spending landscape for 2024 and 2025 which we discuss in the legislative update on the following page. While we are steadfast in our efforts, proposed funding bills from the House and Senate indicate we are likely to see a break in the cycle of annual NIH increases that we've enjoyed since 2016.

In addition to NAEVR's advocacy efforts, AEVR has continued to increase awareness of vision research with the Alliance's Rare Eye Disease Briefing held in May and the Dry Eye Briefing held in July. These briefings are responsible for continuing to engage Congress on the important impact of vision research and have provided a platform for experts, patients, and stakeholders to present and champion the research needs to address a multitude of different vision conditions.

Our advocacy and awareness campaigns continue to showcase the collective strength and value of the vision research community. As we move forward, I encourage all of us to continue to stand together, amplify our voices, and advocate to elevate NEI-funded research.

I extend my deepest gratitude to each of you for your continued dedication and boundless commitment to the mission of the Alliances. It is through your continued support and engagement that we can have a lasting impact on vision science and vision health.

I wish you all an energizing fall and look forward to our continued successes ahead.

Sincerely,

Paul Lee, MD, JD
Executive Director, University of
Michigan Medical Group
Senior Associate Dean, Clinical
Affairs
Professor, Ophthalmology and
Visual Sciences

