

NAEVR SCORECARD LEGISLATIVE ISSUES

Biden Administration Proposes FY2022 NIH Funding to Include New ARPA-H

On May 28, the Biden Administration followed the April 9 release of its initial top-line discretionary budget request with the full FY2022 budget request, inclusive of discretionary and mandatory funding.

The FY2022 NIH total discretionary program level (see chart right) is \$51.953 billion, a \$9.017 billion or 21 percent increase over the comparable FY2021 level of \$42.936 billion. Included in this total is the proposed \$6.5 billion for the new Advanced Research Projects Agency-Health (ARPA-H), which would be available through September 30, 2024. For NIH's core programs [Institutes and Centers, Innovation Fund supporting *21st Century Cures Act* initiatives, training], the budget proposes \$45.453 billion, a \$2.517 billion or 5.9 percent increase. For FY2022, NIH estimates that it will support a total of 44,343 Research Project Grants (RPGs), an increase of 2,260 above that in FY2021. The budget does not include any research recovery funding as a result of COVID-19 pandemic research disruptions.

The budget proposes NEI funding at \$858.54 million, a \$22.83 million or 2.7 percent increase—slightly above the current biomedical inflation rate of 2.4 percent. In its Congressional Justification, NEI identifies its research priorities and states that it will support 1,257 RPGs in FY2022, an increase of 25 above that in FY2021.

The DHHS Budget in Brief provides greater detail about the proposed ARPA-H initiative, with an initial focus on cancer and other diseases such as diabetes and Alzheimer's and designed to make investments that drive transformational innovation in health research and speed application and implementation of health breakthroughs to reduce illness and save lives. ARPA-H plans to work with industry, academia, nonprofits, and other federal agencies using traditional and non-traditional mechanisms to scale up projects with the most promise for improving health and saving lives. NIH will establish a federal advisory panel to provide an avenue for interagency coordination and idea generation.

	FY2016 FINAL*	FY2017 FINAL	FY2018 FINAL	FY2019 FINAL	FY2020 FINAL	FY2021 FINAL*	FY2022 PRESIDENT'S BUDGET**	FY2022 HOUSE+
NIH	\$32.1 B +6.6%	\$34.08 B +6.2%	\$37.08 B +8.8%	\$39.08 B +5.4%	\$41.68 B +6.7%	\$42.93 B +3%	\$51.95 B +21%	\$49 B +15%
NEI	APPROP: \$715.9 M +4.6% OPERATIONAL NET: \$708 M	APPROP: \$732.6 M +3.5% OPERATIONAL NET: \$731.2 M	APPROP: \$772.3 M +5.6% OPERATIONAL NET: \$770.5 M	APPROP: \$796.5 M +3.1% OPERATIONAL NET: \$793.8 M	APPROP: \$824.09 M +3.5% OPERATIONAL NET: \$823.3 M	\$835.71 M +1.4%	\$858.54 M +2.7%	\$877.1 M +5%

* NEI Operational Net reflects \$79 M transferred back to NIH Central of the Studies of Ocular Complications of AIDS (SOCA) funding.

^ Does not include research relief funding for NIH grantees.

** \$9 B NIH increase as follows: \$6.5 B for the Advanced Research Projects Agency-Health (ARPA-H); \$2.5 B for NIH base to \$45.5 B or 5.9% over FY2021.

+ \$6.5 B proposed increase as follows: \$3 B for ARPA-H; \$3.5 B for NIH base to \$46.2 B or 8.2% over FY2021.

NAEVR Testifies in House on FY2022 NIH/NEI, Research Recovery Funding



Michael Crair, PhD
(Yale University)

On May 19, the House LHHS Appropriations Subcommittee held its virtual Public Witness Day hearing—the first since 2019—on FY2022 funding for programs within its bill. Among the 23 witnesses, NAEVR was represented by Michael Crair, PhD, who serves as the Vice Provost for Research and the William Ziegler III Professor in the Departments of Neuroscience and Ophthalmology & Visual Science at Yale University. In his testimony about FY2022 NIH/NEI funding and one-time emergency research recovery funding to mitigate COVID-19 pandemic-related disruptions in research, Dr. Crair:

- Supported President Biden's proposed \$51 billion for NIH overall and emphasized NAEVR's request of at least \$46.1 billion for NIH's base budget, representing an increase of at least \$3.18 billion or 7.4 percent over the FY2021 funding level.
- Urged support for NEI funding at \$900 million, a \$64.3 million or 7.7 percent increase over the FY2021 funding level noting that NEI's average annual growth rate of 2.1 percent over the past nine fiscal years is less than the average annual biomedical inflation rate of 2.7 percent over that timeframe, resulting in NEI's FY2021 purchasing power being less than that in FY2012.
- Recognized NAEVR's support for the bipartisan *Research Investment to Spark the Economy (RISE) Act* (H.R. 869/S. 289), which includes \$10 billion for NIH research recovery. Although recognizing that pandemic-related lab closures have impacted all researchers, he noted that early-stage investigators felt it most acutely, as evidenced by AEVER's September 2020 video discussion with 22 *Emerging Vision Scientists* about their research, training, collaborations, and career progression.

After Dr. Crair's testimony, Subcommittee Chairwoman DeLauro stated her concern about Age-related Macular Degeneration (AMD) due to family history. She also stated that she wanted to ensure that overall NIH funding increases "don't shortchange smaller Institutes, as the discoveries there are just as large."

On June 17, NAEVR submitted similar written testimony to the Senate LHHS Appropriations Subcommittee.

House Appropriators Approve FY2022 Spending Bill with NIH/NEI Increases

On July 15, the House Appropriations Committee approved its FY2022 LHHS spending bill after Subcommittee markup on July 12. The NIH (see chart above) is funded at \$49 billion, which is a \$6.5 billion increase reflecting a \$3.5 billion, or 8.2 percent, increase to NIH's base for a funding level of \$46.2 billion to support at least a 5 percent increase for each I/C and \$3 billion for the proposed ARPA-H. In a separate section, the bill states that ARPA-H funding, which would be available through September 30, 2024, shall only be made available if "legislation specifically establishing ARPA-H is enacted into law." On June 22, House Energy & Commerce Committee members Diana DeGette (D-CO) and Fred Upton (R-MI) had issued a discussion draft for potential *21st Century Cures Act 2.0* legislation that would include establishment of ARPA-H [see next page].

The NEI is funded at \$877.1 million, a \$41.4 million or 5 percent increase over FY2021, reflecting 2.4 percent biomedical inflation and 2.6 percent growth. Although the proposed FY2022 NEI funding level is less than the \$900 million that NAEVR requested (but greater than the \$858 million proposed by the President), the proposed NIH base funding level does reflect the biomedical research advocacy community's request of "at least \$46.1 billion." As a result, NAEVR issued a statement commending the Subcommittee for the bill.

The Senate has not yet approved its top-line spending level or allocations for each its twelve spending bills.