UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA

BERKELEY • DAVIS • IRVINE • LOS ANGELES • MERCED • RIVERSIDE • SAN DIEGO • SAN FRANCISCO SANTA BARBARA • SANTA CRUZ

OFFICE OF THE VICE PRESIDENT – RESEARCH AND INNOVATION

OFFICE OF THE PRESIDENT
1111 Franklin Street, 11th Floor
Oakland, California 94607-5200

April 29, 2025

The Honorable Susan Collins
U.S. Senate
Committee on Appropriations
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Patty Murray
U.S. Senate
Committee on Appropriations
Washington, DC 20510

RE: Statement for the Record regarding the Senate Appropriations Committee hearing "Biomedical Research: Keeping America's Edge in Innovation"

Dear Chairwoman Collins and Vice Chairwoman Murray:

Thank you for the opportunity to provide feedback to the Senate Appropriations Committee on the importance of biomedical research funding, in particular from the National Institutes of Health (NIH).

We write on behalf of the University of California (UC), which is comprised of ten campuses, six academic health centers, three UC-affiliated U.S. Department of Energy national laboratories, and the UC Agriculture and Natural Resources Division. The UC system is the nation's largest recipient of NIH funding, with our faculty awarded more than $2.7 billion in fiscal year (FY) 2024.

Our longstanding partnership with the federal government has contributed greatly to UC's global leadership in scientific discoveries and biomedical innovation. Breakthroughs pioneered by our faculty include key findings at nearly every stage of our country's efforts to fight cancer, including critical drugs and treatments such as Herceptin; significant advances in the flu vaccine; the discovery that HIV causes AIDS; the PET scan; the nicotine patch; and the groundbreaking gene-editing technology CRISPR-Cas9. Of UC's 70 Nobel laureates since 1934, more than one-quarter have been recognized for achievements in physiology, medicine and related fields, underscoring UC's contributions to biomedicine. The University of California is strongly committed to continuing to be an excellent steward of the U.S. taxpayer dollars that have helped make this progress possible.

The collaboration between the NIH, research universities and academic health centers has been at the core of every significant public health gain of the last century. For example, the overall age-adjusted death rates for all cancers in the U.S. dropped 31 percent from 1991 to 2018. That decline can be directly linked to NIH-funded work in prevention, early detection and treatment—including many seminal discoveries at the University of California. NIH support has enabled key drug discoveries—impacting 99.4 percent of FDA-approved drugs from 2010 to 2019. In addition to scientific progress, NIH research funding supports U.S. global scientific competitiveness in the bioeconomy and it directly leads to jobs and investments. According to a study by United for Medical Research, NIH awards directly supported over 407,782 jobs and more than $94.58 billion in economic activity nationwide in FY 2024—or $2.56 of economic activity for every $1 of research funding. In California, it supports over 55,000 jobs and $13.55 billion in economic activity.

For the last 70 years, the federal government has worked with universities and academic medical centers to support a competitive research system that funds the best ideas, regardless of where they come from. This time-proven partnership turns science into innovations that improve the lives of our citizens, protects us from threats and ignites the most powerful economic engine in the world. In the biosciences, sustained investments in the NIH have supported a biomedical ecosystem that benefits the health of all Americans, creates good-paying jobs and equips the nation to respond to public health challenges.

The United States is at a crossroads: maintain our leadership in life-saving research, scientific progress and economic vitality, or cede that incomparable advantage to nations around the world that are aggressively seeking to take our place as the world leader in science. Since January, we have witnessed troubling actions that threaten to undermine the U.S.'s scientific and economic advantage in the world, including turmoil and layoffs at federal research agencies, proposals for massive cuts to scientific research spending, efforts to eliminate support for critical scientific infrastructure, cancellation of competitively awarded grants already determined to be the highest quality of science and wholesale disruption of the research ecosystem. The recent federal actions have created chaos and confusion among scientists and students who make up the backbone of our nation's scientific enterprise, while putting universities such as UC at a disadvantage when trying to attract and retain top talent from around the world.

Now is the time to strengthen—not retreat— from investments that power discovery, promote public health and fuel innovation. Congress must make clear that bipartisan support for the NIH and the other federal research agencies remains strong. We ask you to provide at least $51.303 billion for the NIH for FY 2026, in addition to support for the Advanced Research Projects Agency for Health. We urge Congress to protect and prioritize support for facilities and administrative costs (F&A). F&A funding is not overhead—it is the necessary support for the infrastructure that makes research possible. These funds keep labs operational, support compliance with federal regulations, ensure research integrity and allow UC and institutions nationwide to continue serving as responsible stewards of taxpayer investments.

Since the start of the new administration, the awarding of new NIH grants has nearly ground to a halt and the appearance of new funding opportunities has dramatically slowed. These actions are consequential: impeding advances in public health, disrupting clinical trials and scientific studies,

and halting the development of the next generation of scientists. It is essential that Congress work in a bipartisan manner to ensure the full amount of NIH biomedical research funding appropriated for FY 2025 is used as intended before the fiscal year ends. Institutions, including the University of California, rely on the timely disbursement of research funding to support critical work on federal government priorities.

We appreciate the opportunity to share the views of the University of California. As the Committee pursues meaningful investments in biomedical innovation, please consider our leadership, faculty and students a resource. If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact us or Associate Vice President Chris Harrington. He can be reached at (202) 974-6314 or by email at Chris.Harrington@ucdc.edu.

Sincerely,

Theresa Maldonado, Ph.D., P.E.
Vice President for Research & Innovation

David Rubin, MD, MSCE
Executive Vice President for University of California Health