**Written Statement for the Record prepared for the**
**Subcommittee on Labor, Health and Human Services, Education and Related Agencies**
**Committee on Appropriations**
**United States House of Representatives**

**Fiscal Year 2011 Funding for the**
**National Institutes of Health, Department of Health and Human Service**
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## Sustained Support for NIH Research, Infrastructure, and Workforce

The Association of Independent Research Institutes (AIRI) respectfully submits this written testimony for the record to the House Appropriations Subcommittee on Labor, Health and Human Services, Education and Related Agencies. AIRI appreciates the commitment that the Members of this Subcommittee have made to biomedical research through your strong support for the National Institutes of Health (NIH), and **recommends that you maintain this support for NIH in FY 2011 by providing the agency with a total discretionary budget of at least $32.239 billion as requested by President Obama**. This would be a 3.2 percent increase over the FY 2010 enacted level.

AIRI is a national organization of 91 independent, non-profit research institutes that perform basic and clinical research in the biological and behavioral sciences. AIRI institutes vary in size, with budgets ranging from a few million to hundreds of millions of dollars. In addition, each AIRI member institution is governed by its own independent Board of Directors, which allows our members to focus on discovery based research while remaining structurally nimble and capable of adjusting their research programs to emerging areas of inquiry. Researchers at independent research institutes consistently exceed the success rates of the overall NIH grantee pool, and receive about 10 percent of NIH's peer reviewed, competitively awarded extramural grants. On average, AIRI member institutes receive a total of $1.6 billion in extramural grants from NIH in any given year.

Through passage of the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA) and recent year appropriations bills, Congress has taken important steps to jump start the Nation's economy

through investments in science. Simultaneously, Congress is advancing and accelerating the biomedical research agenda in this country by focusing on scientific opportunities to address public health challenges. NIH now has the ability to fund a record number of research grants, with special emphasis on groundbreaking projects in areas that show the greatest potential for improving health, including genetic medicine, clinical research, and health disparities. In addition, NIH is also funding construction projects and providing support for equipment and instrumentation, which is critically needed to update aging research facilities. We urge NIH to continue its commitment to facility, equipment, and infrastructure support. The infrastructure that we are creating needs to be maintained. Large fluctuations in funding will be disruptive to training, to careers, to long range projects and ultimately to progress. The research engine needs a predictable, sustained investment in science to maximize our return.

NIH is responding to its charge of stimulating the economy through job creation by supporting new scientists. The Recovery Act investments allowed us to see firsthand how research is impacting the economy. We cannot stop the momentum created by these historic investments. We need to be able to continue to advance the new directions charted with the ARRA support in 2011 and beyond.

Keeping up with the rising cost of medical research in the FY 2011 appropriations will help NIH begin to prepare for the "post-stimulus" era. In 2011 and beyond we need to make sure that the total funding available to NIH does not decline and that we can resume a steady, sustainable growth that will enable us to complete the President's vision of doubling our investment in basic research, which is why we are respectfully urging this Subcommittee to increase funding for NIH in FY 2011 by at least 3.2 percent.

**AIRI's Commitment**

*Pursuing New Knowledge* – The US model for conducting biomedical research, which involves supporting scientists at universities, medical centers, and independent research institutes, provides an effective approach to making fundamental discoveries in the laboratory and translating them into medical advances that save lives. AIRI member institutes are private, stand-alone research centers that set their sights on the vast frontiers of medical science, specifically focused on pursuing knowledge about the biology and behavior of living systems and to apply that knowledge to extend healthy life and reduce the burdens of illness and disability.

**High Throughput Technologies.** AIRI Institutes have embraced technologies and research centers to collaborate on biological research for all diseases. Using advanced technology platforms or "cores," AIRI institutes use genomics, imaging, and other broad-based technologies for drug discovery.

**Translational Research**. Translational sciences bridges the divide between basic biomedical research and implementation in a clinical setting. Currently, over 15 AIRI member institutes are affiliated with and collaborate with the Clinical and Translational Science Awards (CTSA) Program. Many AIRI institutes also support research on human embryonic stem cells (hESC) with the hope of discovering new and innovative disease interventions.

**Using Science to Enable Health Care Reform**. As basic biomedical research institutes, AIRI members collaborate with other research partners on patient-centered outcomes research. AIRI members act as the basic research arm for disease treatment (for example, by supporting genetic testing), while other project collaborators study other aspects of disease intervention in an effort to learn the best practices for preventing and treating disease.

**Global Health**. AIRI member institutes focus on a wide range of diseases, many of which have a global affect on human health. Besides supporting research for the treatments, vaccines, and cures of the world's deadliest diseases, a number of AIRI institutes partner with research institutions in the developing world to support international disease research, such as collaborations on HIV/AIDS, Tuberculosis, and Malaria.

**Reinvigorating the Biomedical Research Community.** AIRI supports policies that promote the United States' ability to maintain a competitive edge in biomedical science. The biomedical research community is dependent upon a knowledgeable, skilled, and diverse workforce to address current and future critical health research questions. The cultivation and preservation of this workforce is dependent upon the ability to recruit scientists and students globally as well as training programs in basic and clinical biomedical research. Initiatives focusing on career development and recruiting a diverse scientific workforce are important to innovation in biomedical research for the benefit of public health.

*Providing Efficiency and Flexibility* – AIRI member institutes' small size and valuable flexibility provide an environment that is particularly conducive to creativity and innovation. In addition, independent research institutes possess a unique versatility/culture that encourages them to share expertise, information, and equipment across their institutes and elsewhere, which helps to minimize bureaucracy and increase efficiency when compared to larger degree granting academic universities.

*Supporting Young Researchers* – While the primary function of AIRI institutes is research, most are strongly involved in training the next generation of biomedical researchers and ensuring that a pipeline of promising researchers are prepared to make significant and potentially transformative discoveries in a variety of areas.

AIRI would like to thank the Subcommittee for its important work to ensure the health of the nation, and we appreciate this opportunity to present funding recommendations concerning NIH in the FY 2011 Appropriations bill. AIRI looks forward to working with Congress to carry out the research that will lead to improving the health and quality of life for all Americans.