



DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH & HUMAN SERVICES

Public Health Service

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Washington DC 20201

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CAMBRIDGE, MASS.

Mr. Paul E. Healy
City Clerk
City of Cambridge
City Hall
Cambridge, Massachusetts 02139

Dear Mr. Healy:

Thank you for your letter enclosing a resolution of the Cambridge City Council regarding the Department's budget for health care programs, particularly those under the direction of the National Institutes of Health (NIH).

The Fiscal Year 1984 President's Budget for NIH is \$4.077 billion, an increase of \$73 million over the preceding fiscal year. This budget will enable the NIH to continue to conduct and support highly meritorious and promising research in all the disease areas within its mission.

As in past years, the budget also reflects the Department's and the Administration's policy of supporting 5,000 new and competing research project grants as the primary NIH funding mechanism. Research project grants are considered the most important and productive avenue of NIH research support. It is therefore essential to provide some level of funding predictability for research project grants--such as the goal of 5,000--in order to encourage investigators and physician-scientists to make a long-term commitment to research careers.

To fund 5,000 new and competing renewal research project grants in Fiscal Year 1984, it has been necessary to reduce other NIH funding mechanisms. For example, it will not be possible to fund most applications for new and renewal research center grants in Fiscal Year 1984. The budget would still support, although at reduced levels, all centers for which ongoing commitments have been made.

We recognize that specialized/comprehensive research centers perform a valuable function in terms of bringing together scientific and clinical expertise. They provide the necessary environment for studying specific investigative and clinical problems and for translating the leads generated by basic research into application. Nevertheless, important as they are, they cannot substitute for a strong and broad-based portfolio of research

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project grants if the NIH is to achieve its fundamental goals. We must focus resources on our core functions and responsibilities, the highest of which is the generation of new biomedical knowledge through investigator-initiated inquiry involving discrete research project grants.

Since the Cambridge City Council has expressed particular concern about the funding of three arthritis centers within the Commonwealth--and the activities of these centers related to lupus--I would like to assure you of the NIH commitment to research on lupus, and on the many other forms of arthritis.

In Fiscal Year 1983, the various institutes at NIH directed approximately \$75.8 million toward research on arthritis and related musculoskeletal diseases, including lupus. Even with the expected reductions in funding for arthritis centers, the total amount NIH will expend on arthritis research in Fiscal Year 1984 is estimated at \$75.2 million. Thus, many new research project grants in arthritis will help to offset reductions in the centers program.

I hope this information clarifies the decisions contained in the Fiscal Year 1984 President's Budget for NIH, and conveys that the NIH arthritis research effort is a strong one. As with many other Federal agencies, this Department must make difficult funding choices now and in the future. With regard to NIH, these choices will reflect continuing efforts to conduct and support the very best research possible, in order to gain new knowledge essential to understanding, treating, and preventing disease.

Sincerely yours,

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "E. N. Brandt, Jr." with a stylized flourish at the end.

Edward N. Brandt, Jr., M.D.
Assistant Secretary for Health

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S-418

Comm. from Paul E. Healy, City Clerk, trans.
comm. from Dr. Edward N. Brandt, Jr. Asst.
Secretary for Health, Dept. of Health & Human
Services in acknowledgment of resolutions
adopted by the Council Re: the dept.'s budget
& level of funding for arthritis centers.

In City Council,

August 8, 1983

8/8/1983

- P/need on File