

# NIH & NCI: Funding for Cancer Research



## Background

Cancer continues to take a tremendous toll on our nation. Almost 1.9 million Americans will be diagnosed with cancer in 2021 and more than 608,570 will die from this devastating disease.<sup>1</sup> That means that as a country we lose more than 1,660 Americans every day to cancer. Based on population growth, estimates show that cancer-related health care costs are projected to increase by over 30 percent from 2015 to 2030 reaching a total cost of \$246 billion.<sup>2</sup>

However, because of previous investments in cancer research and prevention there is hope. Today, we have more than 16.9 million American cancer survivors and there has been a 31 percent decrease in the cancer death rate from 1991 through 2018, translating to 3.2 million fewer cancer deaths.<sup>1</sup> This includes a 2.4 percent decline from 2017 to 2018 – a new record for the largest one-year drop in the cancer death rate.<sup>1</sup> Research advances over the past two decades have significantly improved how many cancers are prevented, diagnosed, and treated. Still, here in the U.S., the lifetime risk of developing cancer is two out of five.<sup>1</sup>

## Research: The NIH & NCI

The National Cancer Institute (NCI) is one of 27 institutes and centers within the National Institutes of Health (NIH). The mission of the NCI is to lead, conduct, and support cancer research activities across the nation. For the last 50 years, every major medical breakthrough in cancer can be traced back to the NCI and NIH.

With increases in federal investment in medical research over the last five fiscal years (FY) and the passage of the 21st Century Cures Act that included funding for the National Cancer Moonshot Initiative, Congress has illustrated its bipartisan support for cancer research. These increases for medical research were meant to address years of flat or cut funding, put cancer research back on track and spur additional progress – all toward the end of putting the country on the path toward finally defeating this disease. Funding from the National Cancer Moonshot Initiative has allowed the NCI to support over 240 research projects to date.<sup>3</sup> These awards are helping “leverage advances in immunotherapy, understand drug resistance and develop new technologies to characterize tumors and test therapies,” according to the NCI.<sup>4</sup>

Additionally, the support provided to NIH by Congress has led to job growth and increased economic activity in every state. More than 80 percent of federal funding for the NIH and NCI is spent on biomedical research projects at local research facilities across the country, including almost 50,000 competitive grants to more than 300,000 researchers at over 2,500 universities, medical schools, and other research institutions.<sup>5</sup> According to United for Medical Research, in FY 2020 the NIH provided over \$34 billion in funding to researchers in all 50 states and the District of Columbia.<sup>6</sup> This funding supported more than 536,338 jobs nationwide and produced over \$91.35 billion in new economic activity.

**Please support a FY2022 level of \$51.7 billion for the NIH, including \$7.6 billion for the NCI.**

<sup>1</sup> American Cancer Society. Cancer Facts & Figures 2021. Atlanta: American Cancer Society; 2021.

<sup>2</sup> Mariotto, A. B., Enewold, L., Zhao, J., Zeruto, C. A., & Yabroff, K. R. (2020). Medical Care Costs Associated with Cancer Survivorship in the United States. *Cancer Epidemiology and Prevention Biomarkers*, 29(7), 1304–1312. <https://doi.org/10.1158/1055-9965.EPI-19-1534>.

<sup>3</sup> National Cancer Institute. Cancer Moonshot Progress. Accessed at: <https://www.cancer.gov/research/key-initiatives/moonshot-cancer-initiative/progress>.

<sup>4</sup> Testimony on Implementing the 21st Century Cures Act: An Update from FDA and NIH. Accessed at: <https://www.nih.gov/about-nih/who-we-are/nih-director/testimony-implementing-21st-century-cures-act-update-fda-nih>.

<sup>5</sup> National Institutes of Health (NIH). Budget. Accessed at: <https://www.nih.gov/about-nih/what-we-do/budget>.

<sup>6</sup> United For Medical Research. 2021 Update NIH's Role in Sustaining the U.S. Economy. Accessed at: <https://www.unitedformedicalresearch.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/03/NIHs-Role-in-Sustaining-the-U.S.-Economy-FINAL-3.23.21.pdf>.