

April 16, 2010

Honorable Tom Harkin
Chairman
Subcommittee on Labor-HHS-Education
Committee on Appropriations
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

Honorable Thad Cochran
Ranking Member
Subcommittee on Labor-HHS-Education
Committee on Appropriations
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Chairman Harkin and Ranking Member Cochran:

We respectfully request that the Senate Appropriations Subcommittee on Labor, Health and Human Services, Education, and Related Agencies include funding for the newly-enacted Cures Acceleration Network in the Fiscal Year (FY) 2011 Labor-HHS appropriations bill.

The Cures Acceleration Network (CAN) was enacted as part of the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act (Section 10409 of P.L. 111-148) signed into law on March 23. CAN is a vital new approach to moving high need medical cures through the development pipeline faster – giving hope to millions of patients and their families throughout the country.

The CAN Act seeks to cut the time between scientific discovery and the development of promising new drugs and therapies. It establishes CAN within the Office of the Director of the National Institutes of Health (NIH) and authorizes new grant-making mechanisms to more quickly move discoveries from the lab into the next generation of therapies. CAN will help coordinate the efforts of all stakeholders in the drug development process – including patient advocacy organizations and agencies outside of NIH – in order to move discoveries forward. The law also includes the Food and Drug Administration in the work that CAN will undertake, providing a crucial link between NIH and the drug approval process.

We request that, consistent with section 402C(g)(1) of the CAN Act, \$500 million be appropriated for CAN in FY2011 and that the funds be made available until expended. This will allow NIH to begin implementation of CAN, establish the CAN Board, analyze the research needs, and start the process of making the kinds of translational grants that will get new drugs and therapies to those who most need them.

We are greatly encouraged that a commitment has been made to medical innovation and the acceleration of new treatments and therapies for millions of Americans living with disease. We urge you to appropriate funds for the Cures Acceleration Network so that this important life-saving work can get underway as quickly as possible.

Sincerely,

Abigail Alliance for Better Access to Developmental Drugs
Alexion Pharmaceuticals
Alliance for Aging Research
Alliance for Regenerative Medicine
Alpha-1 Association

Alpha-1 Foundation
ALS Association
ALS Therapy Development Institute
Alseres
Alzheimer's Association
American Institute for Medical and Biological Engineering
American Parkinson Disease Association
Association for Clinical Research Training
Association for Patient-Oriented Research
Association of Academic Health Science Libraries
AVAC: Global Advocacy for HIV Prevention
Batten Disease Support and Research Association
Benign Essential Blepharospasm Research Foundation
BIO Ventures for Global Health
Biotechnology Industry Organization
Californians4cures
CANN - Community Access National Network
Celiac Disease Center at Columbia University
Ceregene
Citizens United for Research in Epilepsy
Clinical Research Forum
Coalition of Heritable Disorders of Connective Tissue
Colon Cancer Alliance
COPD Foundation
Council for American Medical Innovation
Cutaneous Lymphoma Foundation
Cystic Fibrosis Foundation
Digestive Disease National Coalition
Dystonia Advocacy Network
Dystonia Medical Research Foundation
Easter Seals
FasterCures
Foundation for Sarcoidosis Research
Friends of Cancer Research
Genetic Alliance
Global Healthy Living Foundation
Harlem United Community AIDS Center, Inc
Huntington's Disease Society of America
Infectious Diseases Society of America
International AIDS Vaccine Initiative
International Foundation for Functional Gastrointestinal Disorders
International Myeloma Foundation
Interstitial Cystitis Association
Juvenile Diabetes Research Foundation
Kakkis EveryLife Foundation
Leukemia & Lymphoma Society

Lung Cancer Alliance
Medical Library Association
Michael J. Fox Foundation for Parkinson's Research
Muscular Dystrophy Association
National Disease Research Interchange
National Health Council
National Minority AIDS Council
National MPS Society
National Multiple Sclerosis Society
National Parkinson Foundation
National PKU Alliance
National Tay-Sachs & Allied Diseases Association
National Venture Capital Association
NephCure Foundation
New York Stem Cell Foundation
Parent Project Muscular Dystrophy
Parkinson Alliance and Parkinson's Unity Walk
Parkinson's Action Network
Parkinson's Disease Foundation
PKD Foundation
PXE International
Rett Syndrome Research Trust
Scleroderma Foundation
Society for Clinical and Translational Science
Spinal Muscular Atrophy Foundation
SRI International
Student Society for Stem Cell Research
The AIDS Institute
The Christopher and Dana Reeve Foundation
Tuberous Sclerosis Alliance