

AIMBE POSITION STATEMENT

AIMBE's Support of Enhancing Funding for the National Institutes of Health

ISSUE

In FY09, the funding of the National Institutes of Health (NIH) will remain static for the fifth consecutive fiscal year, with no allowance for inflation. This flat budget has curbed the ability of NIH to support new research which risks America's role as the global leader of health innovation.

BACKGROUND

From 1998 to 2003, NIH experienced a yearly 15% increase in funding. After peaking in 2004, funding for the Institutes at NIH has been declining after adjusting for inflation. Less than 20% of grant applications were approved in 2008. NIH expects to continue to fund less than 1 out of every 5 applications. Those grants that are funded, on average, receive less than their counterparts of five years ago, despite the increasing research costs.

In 2006, President Bush announced the American Competitiveness Agenda, calling to "double the federal commitment to the most critical basic research programs in the physical sciences over the next 10 years." Since this proclamation, funding for medical and biological research through NIH has remained flat. As a result of inflation, the purchasing power at NIH has decreased by 13% over the past five years. This five year plateau represents a drastic reversal in science and technology funding and is not in the spirit of President Bush's vision.

Of specific interest to AIMBE is the National Institute of Biomedical Imaging and Bioengineering (NIBIB). The mission of NIBIB is to improve health by leading the development and accelerating the application of biomedical technologies. The Institute is committed to integrating the physical and engineering sciences with the life sciences to advance basic research and medical care. Additionally, NIBIB has a stronger focus than any of the other Institutes at the NIH on translating basic research to product for clinical use, thus directly benefiting the U.S. economy and the health of American citizens.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Congress must take action to support medical and biological engineering funding through NIH. AIMBE supports the following actions:

- Congressional language designating appropriations for medical and biological engineering research funding through NIH.
- Additionally, AIMBE supports accelerated increases in funding at the NIBIB.

