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AACI Strongly Opposes President's Cuts to NIH in Fiscal Year 2018 "Skinny Budget"

The Association of American Cancer Institutes (AACI) expresses opposition to President Donald Trump's proposed "skinny budget" for Fiscal Year (FY) 2018. The President's recommendation would cut funding to the National Institutes of Health (NIH) by \$6 billion, or approximately 19 percent, which translates to a cut of nearly \$1 billion in funding to the National Cancer Institute (NCI). These drastic cuts to the NIH and NCI would significantly reduce each budget to the equivalent of FY 2002 funding levels.

While cancer centers were encouraged by the funding stream included in the 21st Century Cures Act, this fund is not a sufficient alternative to appropriations for the NIH and NCI and would not cover the extreme budget reductions proposed in the "skinny budget." Additionally, the federal government has yet to fund the NIH and NCI for FY 2017, as it continues to operate at FY 2016 levels.

AACI Executive Director Barbara Duffy Stewart, MPH, said in response to the President's proposal, "Federal investments in cancer research have led to advancements in our understanding of cancer and groundbreaking research that has the potential to accelerate progress faster than ever before. A severely reduced biomedical research budget would diminish academic cancer centers' ability to develop and discover breakthrough therapies and treatments for patients, and potentially sideline promising research projects that are still under review for funding."

AACI institutions house more than 20,000 scientific, clinical and public health investigators who collaborate in order to translate research findings into new approaches to preventing and treating cancer, but there is more to be done to make continued progress. These institutions are beacons of discovery and are largely funded by the NIH and NCI, which rely on stable and predictable federal funding to invest in groundbreaking cancer research.

Stewart added, "AACI cancer centers are at the forefront of developing new methods for the prevention and detection of cancers and the delivery of high quality cancer care. The proposed cuts to the NIH and NCI budget for FY 2018 are unacceptable. We join our colleagues in the biomedical research community in urging members of Congress to reject President Trump's proposed cuts to NIH and provide a robust federal investment to the NIH and NCI for not only the current Fiscal Year, but for FY 2018 and beyond."

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The Association of American Cancer Institutes (AACI) comprises 96 premier academic and freestanding cancer research centers in the U.S. and Canada. AACI is dedicated to reducing the burden of cancer by enhancing the impact of the leading academic cancer centers.