Vision Community Actions and NAEVR’s Statement Regarding Funding Proposals

Within the constant drumbeat of advocacy, NAEVR also coordinated the following actions in June prior to the markups:

- Hand-delivered to House and Senate appropriations leaders letters signed by the ARVO Board of Trustees and the Association of University Professors of Ophthalmology (AUPO) department chairs from around the country that urged NIH/NEI increases.
- ARVO members sent 1,500 letters to their Congressional delegations requesting support.
- NAEVR held a June 3 Congressional briefing that described NEI-funded research into inflammatory eye disease, specifically Uveitis (see story right).

After the markups, NAEVR commended the House and Senate appropriations leaders for making increased NIH funding a priority in the FY2016 process.

“We especially wish to thank the Senate leadership for responding to the biomedical research community’s request that the NIH be funded at a level of at least $32 billion and for increasing NEI funding to a level that exceeds its FY2012 pre-sequester budget. We urge Congressional leaders to come together to make increased NIH/NEI funding a reality within the larger context of a balanced approach to deficit reduction to ensure the health—and vision health—of all Americans, while encouraging innovation, strengthening the economy, and sustaining America’s competitiveness.”

NAEV R Joins Fellow Sponsors in Identifying Priorities for the IOM Study Board

On May 19, the Institute of Medicine (IOM) of the National Academies held the first meeting of the Advisory Board on Population Health and Public Health Practice for its study entitled 21st Century Cures Act. This bipartisan legislation, championed by E&C Committee Chairman Cong. Fred Upton (R-MI) and Oversight and Investigations (O&I) Subcommittee Ranking Member Cong. Diana DeGette (D-CO), is the product of more than a year of work with patients, advocates, researchers, innovators, and health care professionals to accelerate the discovery, development, and delivery of life-saving and life-improving therapies. At press time, the House was expected to take up the bill in July.

Although wide-sweeping in its scope and impact on federal agencies, NAEVR has focused on the bill’s authorizing levels for the NIH, which would increase by $1.5 billion per-year for the next three fiscal years and its establishment of a new Innovation Fund at $1.75 billion per-year for the next five fiscal years for a total of $8.75 billion for basic, translational, and clinical research, including funding for early-stage investigators. The latter would be supported through mandatory funding.

On May 21, NAEVR hand-delivered a letter to Chairman Upton and O&I Subcommittee Ranking Member DeGette, as well as full Committee Ranking Member Frank Pallone, Jr. (D-NJ), Health Subcommittee Chairman Joe Pitts (R-PA), and Health Subcommittee Ranking Member Gene Green (D-TX), commending them for their commitment to patients and for developing the legislation through an open process that sought input from all stakeholders.

NAEV R will participate in the open session of the IOM Study Advisory Board’s next meeting, scheduled for July 28-29 in Washington, D.C.

Visit the NIH/NEI funding section of NAEVR’s Web site at www.eyeresearch.org for full details