FY2008 LHHS Appropriations Bills Laud NEI Trans-Institute Research

Report Language in the House and Senate LHHS appropriations bills, recommended by NAEVR, recognizes the importance of NEI’s collaborative research as follows:

AMD
“The Committee commends the NEI for its trans-Institute research into the cause, prevention, and treatment of AMD. The Committee also applauds NEI for initiating the second phase of its Age-related Eye Diseases Study (AREDS), in which additional dietary supplements are being studied to determine if they can demonstrate or enhance their protective effects against progression to the advanced form of AMD.”

Diabetic Retinopathy
“The Committee applauds NEI for the collaborative efforts of the Diabetic Retinopathy Clinical Research Network to test innovative treatments for diabetic eye disease. The Institute is encouraged to consider expanding and extending the network by increasing the number of clinical trials with new drugs and therapeutics.”

National Ophthalmic Disease Genotyping Network (eyeGene)
“The Committee congratulates NEI on its progress in identifying many of the genes involved in some of the most devastating eye diseases, including AMD, retinitis pigmentosa, and glaucoma, and the progress that has been made in understanding the underlying disease mechanisms and in developing appropriate treatments. The eyeGene Network will help accelerate application of these new approaches to medicine.”

Vision Community Urges Further FDA Collaboration with the NEI

In a May 2 letter, NAEVR’s Dr. Stephen Ryan thanked FDA Commissioner Andrew von Eschenbach, M.D., for his recent public mention at a National Health Council meeting about the collaborative research between the NEI and National Cancer Institute (NCI) that resulted in the first generation of FDA-approved ophthalmic drugs to treat the “wet” form of AMD. NAEVR used this letter to commend FDA’s Janice Soreth, M.D., director of the Division of Anti-Infective and Ophthalmology Products within the FDA’s Center for Drug Evaluation and Research (CDER), for working with NEI Director Dr. Paul Sieving on the November 2006 NEI/FDA Ophthalmic Clinical Trial Design and Endpoints Meeting, which was managed by ARVO. That meeting addressed outcomes variables and clinical trial strategies for evaluating new treatments for AMD and diabetic retinopathy (DR).

“The vision research community looks forward to further collaborations between the NEI and FDA to consider how the latest research can be applied to ophthalmic product approvals, not only for retinal diseases such as AMD and DR, but also complex neurodegenerative diseases such as glaucoma,” wrote Dr. Ryan.

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