President’s Message
2005 Scorecard and 2006 Forecast

NAEVR’s number one priority was opposing the clustering of Institute budgets in draft NIH reauthorization legislation issued by the House Energy and Commerce Committee. NAEVR’s strong opposition to budget clusters—as well as its leadership in engaging other advocates in this regard—resulted in draft legislation stalling, with no schedule for action set at this time. We have forged useful working relationships with the Republican and Democratic leadership of the Committee, and will continue to educate about the necessity of NEI retaining its budget line item in leading our national commitment to eye and vision research.

The advocacy community, including NAEVR, expended truly Herculean efforts to increase NIH/NEI funding in the FY2006 Labor, Health and Human Services and Education (LHHS) appropriations bill. Even armed with our NEI research value message, including the discovery of a gene strongly associated with age-related macular degeneration (AMD) that was heralded by NIH Director Dr. Zerhouni as a breakthrough, Congress flat funded then reduced FY2006 funding even further with the one percent across-the-board cut to control spending. For FY2007, we will focus on what we have lost from the NIH doubling due to flat funding and biomedical inflation, as well as identify missed opportunities to build on previous research.

Although FY2006 NEI funding decreased by $2 million, our efforts resulted in eye and vision research being listed in the Department of Defense Congressionally-directed Medical Research Program, which has a pool of $50 million of peer-reviewed funding. NAEVR will work with the community to access this funding source, as we need to be actively engaged to maintain this listing in the future or for institutions to seek direct earmarks.

We have a compelling message to share about the need to appropriately fund our nation’s health and vision health research, which is so vital to controlling healthcare costs, ensuring productivity and quality of life and maintaining global competitiveness. On behalf of the Boards, I want to express my appreciation for your support in 2005, and I look forward to working with all of you in 2006 to further amplify our value message.

“We will identify the missed opportunities associated with flat NIH/NEI funding.”

— Stephen J. Ryan, M.D.
Doheny Eye Institute
NAEVR/AEVR Boards President