NIH Director Francis Collins, M.D., Ph.D. has requested that medical research advocacy organizations briefly summarize their top concerns. In its March 15 submission, NAEVR initially acknowledged NEI’s 40 years of leadership in basic, translational, and clinical research, as well as in trans-NIH and trans-Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) collaborations. NAEVR also cited NEI research that addresses Dr. Collins’ top five NIH priorities–genomics, translational research, comparative effectiveness research, global health, and empowering the biomedical research community–which NEI described in its FY2011 budget Congressional Justification.

NAEVR identified its top priorities as:

• Robust NIH/NEI funding, stating its support for FY2011 NIH funding at $35 billion and expressing concern about the proposed less-than-inflationary increase for NEI (see story above); and

• Potential NIH budget clusters, stating NAEVR’s ongoing opposition to “clustering” V/C budgets within NIH and support for maintaining a separate NEI budget line. NAEVR noted that it is tracking the activities of the NIH Scientific Management Review Board (SMRB), which is charged with making recommendations regarding NIH structure, and convenes meetings with “Friends” of other smaller Institutes to share strategies.

Per the funding chart, final FY 2010 appropriations, signed into law by President Obama on December 16, 2009, increased NIH funding to $31 billion, a $691.8 million or 2.3 percent increase over FY2009, and NEI funding to $707.04 million, an $18.5 million or 2.7 percent increase. Since NEI programmed $26.7 million of its ARRA funding for 2010, vision researchers will have a total of $45 million more than FY2009 NEI baseline funding.

### NAEVR Concerned About NEI Funding in President’s Proposed FY2011 Budget

Per the funding chart, the President’s FY2011 proposed budget released on February 1 would provide a 3.2 percent inflationary increase for the NIH, but only a 2.4 percent increase for the NEI, the second lowest of the NIH Institutes and Centers (I/Cs). In a statement, NAEVR stressed that now is not the time for a less-than-inflationary increase for NEI since it would result in a net loss in purchasing power, which had already declined by 18 percent in the FY2003-2008 timeframe. NAEVR noted that Congress spoke volumes in passing H. Res. 366 and S. Res. 209 in 2009, which acknowledged NEI’s 40th anniversary and designated 2010-2020 as the Decade of Vision. Year 2010 begins a decade in which more than half of the 78 million Baby Boomers will turn 65 years of age and be at greatest risk for developing aging eye disease.

NAEVR has called on Congress to improve upon the President’s proposed budget by supporting an FY2011 NIH funding level of $35 billion, per the previous story about ARVO Advocacy Day.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>NIH*</th>
<th>FY 2008 Final</th>
<th>FY 2009 Final**</th>
<th>FY 2010 Final**</th>
<th>FY 2011 President’s Request</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>$29.38 B</td>
<td>$30.3 B +3.2%</td>
<td>$31 B +2.3%</td>
<td>$32.2 B +3.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NEI</td>
<td>$670.7 M</td>
<td>$688.5 M +3.2%</td>
<td>$707.04 M +2.7%</td>
<td>$714.36 M +2.4%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* Net of Transfers/One Time Expenses
** Absent ARRA Funding

On December 2, 2009 AEVF joined ARVO in co-sponsoring a medical research advocacy community Capitol Hill Welcome Reception for Dr. Collins, attended by numerous Members of Congress and their staff.

On February 24, DHHS Secretary Kathleen Sebelius was joined by Dr. Collins and Food and Drug Administration (FDA) Commissioner Margaret Hamburg, M.D. in announcing a new NIH/FDA collaboration “to accelerate and illuminate the pathway from microscope to marketplace,” which includes:

- Establishing a joint NIH/FDA Leadership Council, co-chaired by Drs. Collins and Hamburg and consisting of six senior representatives from each agency, to ensure that regulatory considerations form an integral component of biomedical research planning and that the latest science is incorporated into the regulatory review process.
- A planned Stakeholders Meeting to seek input from interested parties, especially the manufacturer community whose products are regulated by FDA.
- A Request for Application (RFA) entitled Advancing Regulatory Science through Novel Research and Science-based Technologies to support research into regulatory science. Over a three-year timeframe, NIH will commit $6 million and the FDA $750,000 to this initiative, for a total of $6.75 million.

Visit the dedicated NIH/NEI and ARRA funding sections of NAEVR’s Web site for full details.