

As health care providers, we agree with our national political leaders that there needs to be a reduction in government spending. We are sympathetic to the need for the federal government to show fiscal restraint in deciding what is essential for Americans. Difficult choices must to be made because our country needs to reduce the national debt in order to ensure a strong economy for our children and grandchildren. While spending reductions are necessary, an area that is worth protecting is research that safeguards the health, productivity, and longevity of the American people.

The first step in confronting these difficult choices for reducing spending is to prioritize our needs. Whether trimming our household budget or our nation's budget, we believe that the health of our families and of all Americans must to be a priority. If we are to achieve the goal of our government's "Make America Healthy Again" program, we must ensure that the necessary reductions in the federal budget do not compromise medical research on disease prevention and treatment. These are key to ensuring a healthy future for us and for future generations.

Reducing funding for research on diseases such as cancer, Alzheimer's, mental illness, brain disorders, and other medical conditions could stop and possibly reverse progress in combating their consequences. These diseases deprive us of a long healthy life and of our expectations to enjoy our constitutionally granted rights of liberty and the pursuit of happiness.

At the beginning of the 21st century, health research was responsible for extending American lives by nearly two years (i.e., from 76.8 years in 2000

to 78.7 years in 2010). This progress in adding years to our lives was due to meaningful advances in combating the following disorders:

- Cancer – The five-year survival rate for cancer rose nearly 20 percent since the mid-1970s. Forty percent of Americans will be diagnosed with cancer at some point in their lives according to the National Cancer Institute. Funding cuts in cancer research could set back or reverse progress in perfecting new screening and treatment methods with immunotherapies and stem cells. As a result, we or someone close to us will more likely lose their fight against cancer.
- Alzheimer’s and other dementias – Research funded by the National Institute on Aging (NIA) has created new methods of employing biomarkers for early detection and discovery of new drugs that slow disease progression. These advances help people remain in their homes longer, reduce caregiver burden, and delay costly nursing home placement. This gives people the opportunity to enjoy productive lives and have extended time with their families. The 2026 budget proposes a 40 percent cut in research support to the NIA. Funding cuts would stall progress just as research is finally gaining traction against a disease affecting 6.7 million Americans, a number expected to more than double by 2060. Furthermore, there will be an increase in costs for families and federal programs paying for advanced dementia care.

- Mental illness – Post-traumatic stress disorder, major depression, clinical anxiety, bipolar disorder, and other psychiatric conditions reduce our nation’s productivity, increase unemployment numbers, contribute to disability claims, and lower our educational standing in comparison to other countries. Research has led to the development of treatments that reduce the illness burden that: (1) restricts the ability for gainful employment, and (2) frequently leads people self-medicate with alcohol and illicit drugs. These treatments also permit individuals to remain in their communities and to avoid institutional care that once was common. Cuts to research on mental illness will impact individuals and their families by stalling further advances in treatment.
- Drug infiltration - Proposed federal budget cuts could eliminate as much as \$1 billion from the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration. This already has had a negative impact on a range of programs designed to support those with addiction and/or serious mental illness in becoming productive members of society. Naloxone is a medication that has contributed to a 25% decline in opioid overdose deaths since 2024, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. It is one example of how federally supported research saves lives and reduces long-term cost to the public. Proposed federal funding to support the development of other medications as well as programs to help maintain sobriety must continue unabated if we are to make progress in solving our country’s

mental health crisis and associated problems with addictive behaviors. International drug smuggling also may be reduced once the market for these drugs is effectively decreased.

- Brain disorders - Research has developed new ways to treat brain tumors more effectively and with fewer side effects. This is particularly important for treating brain tumors in children because they are especially sensitive to side effects. The federally funded Pediatric Brain Tumor Consortium, formed by the National Cancer Institute, led to groundbreaking studies that developed therapies for the deadliest pediatric brain cancers for which almost no effective treatments existed. Budgetary cuts to this consortium are scheduled for March 2026. As a result, enrollment in critical trials already has been halted. Many children no longer will have the opportunity to benefit from these innovative treatments, unnecessarily jeopardizing their potential for recovery that would extend their lives.

To learn more about advances in research for these and other health conditions that will be jeopardized by proposed budgetary cuts, please visit our Facebook page (<https://www.facebook.com/groups/nysan>).

We urge our federal representatives to restore funding to federal agencies that support the physical and mental health of all Americans. It is important to realize that money invested in research today will pay dividends in the

long run by not only avoiding the costs of caring for people with these conditions, but also increasing productivity, quality of life, and longevity for Americans. We urge our fellow citizens to consider the ongoing benefits of continuing federal funding for health research and supporting representatives who are in favor of medical research as a budgetary priority.

-NYSAN (New York State Association of Neuropsychology)

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