

**American College of Cardiology Statement to the
Senate Appropriations Subcommittee on Labor, HHS, Education, & Related Agencies
FY 2024 Funding for NIH and CDC
May 18, 2023**

The American College of Cardiology (ACC) is the global leader in transforming cardiovascular care and improving heart health for all. As the preeminent source of professional medical education for the entire cardiovascular care team since 1949, and now with more than 56,000 members from over 140 countries, the ACC credentials cardiovascular professionals who meet stringent qualifications and leads in the formation of health policy, standards and guidelines. The College is committed to ensuring a world where science, knowledge and innovation optimize patient care and outcomes. To advance these goals, ACC urges members of Congress to appropriate the following funds towards agencies doing vital work in cardiovascular disease (CVD) treatment and prevention:

- \$51 billion for the National Institutes of Health (NIH), with \$4.273 billion going towards the National Heart Lung & Blood Institute (NHLBI) and \$121 million to the NIH Office of Nutrition and Health; and,
- funding for the following programs at the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC):
 - \$14 million for the Million Hearts Initiative
 - \$160 million for the Division for Heart Disease and Stroke Prevention
 - \$46.7 million for the WISE WOMAN program
 - \$310 million for the Office on Smoking and Health.

More information on each of these requests is described further below.

National Institutes of Health (NIH)

ACC would like to thank Congress for recent funding increases for the National Institutes of Health (NIH) in FY 2023. Past support of NIH funding has been instrumental in advancing research in the field of cardiovascular medicine, leading to significant innovations in the care of patients with heart disease.

NIH funding has been critical in supporting basic and clinical research, leading to innovative treatments and preventive measures for CVD, such as statins, ACE inhibitors,

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The mission of the American College of Cardiology and the American College of Cardiology Foundation is to transform cardiovascular care and improve heart health for all.

and newer anticoagulants. NIH funding has also supported groundbreaking research into understanding the genetic basis of heart disease, which has led to the development of new and more effective therapies.

While the College applauds Congress's past support, more work is needed. CVD remains the leading cause of death among men and women in the United States and is responsible for one in every five deaths nationally. More than 92 million Americans currently suffer from some form of CVD – nearly one-third of the population – but it remains one of the most underfunded fatal diseases, as the NIH only invests four percent of its research dollars in heart research. Despite reduced capacity to fund grants and support new discoveries, the NIH continues to enhance and save millions of lives. The heart disease death rate has continued to drop since the 1970s due to scientific advances and improved heart medications and procedures – but to meet the challenges of an aging population, rising obesity rates and unhealthy diets, the NIH must be at the forefront of medical innovation for years to come. **Since many life-saving interventions related to heart disease result from investments in medical research, ACC recommends that the NIH be funded at \$51 billion for fiscal year (FY) 2024.**

The National Heart, Lung, and Blood Institute (NHLBI) is an essential component of the NIH that conducts and supports research aimed at preventing, diagnosing, and treating heart, lung, and blood diseases. These conditions, which include heart disease, stroke, asthma, and atrial fibrillation, among others, are among the leading causes of death and disability in the United States. The NHLBI has made significant contributions to the understanding and treatment of these conditions through its support of basic, translational, and clinical research. For example, the institute has played a critical role in developing life-saving treatments for heart attack and stroke, including clot-dissolving drugs and interventions such as stents. The NHLBI has also supported impactful research into the genetics of cardiovascular disease, which has led to the development of personalized treatments based on an individual's genetic profile. **Therefore, ACC recommends that NHLBI be funded at \$4.273 billion to maintain current activities and investment toward new research and emerging technologies related to heart disease.**

The Office of Nutrition Research (ONR) has recently been relocated within the NIH to reside within the NIH Office of the Director and is dedicated to advancing nutrition research to improve public health outcomes. The ONR supports and coordinates nutrition research efforts across the NIH and provides leadership in developing research priorities related to nutrition and diet. Investment in the ONR will accelerate nutrition science discoveries and advance the understanding of nutrition's role in preventing and treating chronic diseases, such as obesity, diabetes, and heart disease. Approaching food as a form

of preventative medicine can positively impact cardiovascular health as well as health equity and its major drivers (high blood pressure, abnormal blood cholesterol, and Type 2 diabetes). **Therefore, the College urges Congress to allocate \$121 million to the ONR in FY 2024.**

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC)

The College also recognizes the significant role of the CDC and its critical work in preventing heart disease in the United States. The CDC works with a wide range of partners, including other federal agencies, state and local health departments, and community organizations, to promote cardiovascular health and prevent heart disease through various programs and initiatives.

One of the CDC's key initiatives for preventing heart disease is its Million Hearts program, which aims to prevent 1,000,000 heart attacks and strokes within five years. The program focuses on implementing evidence-based strategies and targets to improve cardiovascular health for all Americans. The initiative aims to achieve this goal by encouraging the public to lead a healthy and active lifestyle, as well as improving medication adherence for aspirin and other medications to manage blood pressure, cholesterol, and smoking cessation. **Therefore, ACC recommends that Million Hearts be funded at \$14 million to enhance efforts preventing heart attacks and strokes.**

The CDC Division for Heart Disease and Stroke Prevention supports efforts to improve cardiovascular health by promoting healthy lifestyles and behaviors, healthy environments, and access to early treatment and affordable detection. The division engages with state and local health departments and a variety of other partners to provide funding and resources, conduct research, track risk factors, and evaluate current programs and policies relating to heart disease. **ACC recommends funding the CDC Division for Heart Disease and Stroke Prevention at \$160 million to continue its critical initiatives among America's most vulnerable communities.**

A key initiative within the Division for Heart Disease and Stroke Prevention is the WISEWOMAN program which aims to improve the heart health of low-income, uninsured, or underinsured women aged 40 to 64 years who are enrolled in the CDC's National Breast and Cervical Cancer Early Detection Program (NBCCEDP), which helps ensure women participating in the NBCCEDP receive a full range of health services. WISEWOMAN is an evidence-based program that has been shown to be effective in reducing the risk of heart disease among participants. Women who participate in the program are more likely to have their blood pressure, cholesterol, and blood glucose levels under control, as well as engage

in healthy lifestyle behaviors. **ACC encourages lawmakers to build upon the program's past success and provide \$46.7 million to the WISEWOMAN program in FY 2024.**

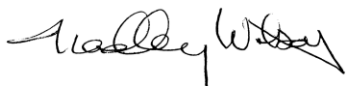
The Office of Smoking and Health (OSH) is a department within CDC dedicated to reducing tobacco use's impact on public health. The OSH works to prevent and reduce tobacco use by providing evidence-based research, developing and implementing comprehensive tobacco control programs, and supporting policies that promote tobacco-free environments. Additionally, OSH offers educational materials and support for individuals who want to quit smoking, as well as information for healthcare providers to help them support their patients in quitting smoking. **ACC urges Congress to provide OSH with a funding level of \$310 million in FY 2024 to continue leading the nation's efforts in preventing chronic disease caused by tobacco use.**

Conclusion

On behalf of the ACC's members who work to prevent and treat CVD, ACC would like to thank members of the Appropriations Subcommittee for supporting medical innovation as we continue the fight against heart disease. Stable funding for research, surveillance, and healthy lifestyle promotion will save lives and lower healthcare costs in the long term. Please help secure robust NIH and CDC funding to protect our nation's health for future generations.

For further information about cardiovascular research or ACC's FY 2024 requests, please contact Foster Curry, Congressional Affairs Manager, at 202-375-6634 or FCurry@acc.org.

Sincerely,



B. Hadley Wilson, MD, FACC
ACC President