

**Friends of the National Institute of Mental Health (NIMH)  
Public Witness Testimony**

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**Fiscal Year 2026 Appropriations  
National Institutes of Health  
National Institute of Mental Health**

**United States Senate  
Committee on Appropriations  
Subcommittee on Labor, Health and Human Services,  
Education and Related Agencies**

**June 13, 2025**

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Chair Capito, Ranking Member Baldwin, and distinguished members of the Subcommittee, we write on behalf of the National Institute of Mental Health (NIMH), National Institutes of Health (NIH). The Friends of NIMH encourages the subcommittee to provide robust funding for NIMH in FY 2026, allowing the Institute to build upon its behavioral, biomedical, and social research mission and important initiatives, thereby providing new insights and solutions to benefit your constituents. **Aligned with the Ad Hoc request, we respectfully request that the subcommittee provide at least \$51.303 billion to NIH in Fiscal Year (FY) 2026. We further request that NIMH receive an increase commensurate to any increase to the topline NIH budget.**

We are grateful for the Subcommittee's past leadership in making investments in mental and behavioral health. The Friends of NIMH is a coalition of more than 35 organizations representing scientists, physicians, health care providers, individuals and families affected by mental illness, and community leaders. Collectively, the members of the Friends of NIMH are dedicated to supporting NIMH's mission to transform the understanding of mental health and the treatment of mental illnesses and conditions through basic behavioral, biomedical, and clinical research to best inform prevention, early intervention, recovery, and cures.

We share the Administration's concern about the need to address chronic disease in our country. The work of NIMH is pivotal in addressing our nation's most significant chronic disease: mental illness. According to the National Survey of Drug Use and Health (NSDUH),

84.5 million adults had a mental illness or substance use condition in 2023.<sup>1</sup> Additionally, more than 14.6 million adults lived with a serious mental illness in 2023.<sup>2</sup> And as noted by NIMH, mental health includes emotional, psychological, and social well-being and is more than the absence of mental illness.

Because of the co-occurring nature of mental illness and many other chronic health conditions,<sup>3</sup> supporting crucial NIMH-supported research becomes even more critical in the Administration's efforts to address our nation's chronic diseases. The impact of chronic diseases on mental health is a significant concern to the mental and public health communities. The research has shown the bidirectional relationship between mental health conditions and chronic diseases. Additional research is needed to better understand this relationship.

The Friends of NIMH's member organizations represent communities with interest across the NIH. Individually and collectively, our members also belong to the Ad Hoc Group for Medical Research, a coalition of more than 400 patient and voluntary health groups, medical and scientific societies, academic and research organizations, and industry that support enhancing the federal investment in the behavioral and biomedical research conducted and supported by the NIH. **Aligned with the Ad Hoc request, we respectfully request that the subcommittee provide at least \$51.303 billion to NIH in Fiscal Year (FY) 2026. We further request that NIMH receive an increase commensurate to any increase to the topline NIH budget.**

We also urge the Subcommittee to reinstate funding for the NIH Brain Research through Advancing Innovative Neurotechnologies (BRAIN) Initiative. Unfortunately, brain disorders, including depression, Alzheimer's, Parkinson's, schizophrenia, autism, and traumatic brain injury, among others, are projected to be among the costliest chronic diseases. **We respectfully request your Subcommittee to restore funding to \$680 million for the BRAIN Initiative for FY 2026.**

As you know, the BRAIN Initiative is supported by the 21st Century Cures Innovation Fund, and with diminishing resources available from the fund, it is critical that Congress provide robust discretionary appropriations to allow this groundbreaking program to continue to make revolutionary advances that improve brain and overall health outcomes. The Initiative is revolutionizing our understanding of the brain and offering hope for the millions of individuals impacted by brain diseases and conditions.

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<sup>1</sup> Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration. (2024). Key substance use and mental health indicators in the United States: Results from the 2023 National Survey on Drug Use and Health (HHS Publication No. PEP24-07-021, NSDUH Series H-59). Center for Behavioral Health Statistics and Quality, Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration. <https://www.samhsa.gov/data/report/2023-nsduh-annual-national-report>

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>3</sup> Huang, Y., Loux, T., Huang, X., & Feng, X. (2023). The relationship between chronic diseases and mental health: A cross-sectional study. *Mental Health and Prevention*, 32, Article 200307. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.mhp.2023.200307>.

## Protecting Congressional Authority

One area where there is notable confidence and approval is in the support for medical research and the pursuit of cures. That is why the work NIH, and the Congress are undertaking is incredibly significant to the country. The decisions made by both NIH and the Congress have the potential to bring about meaningful change, offering hope to individuals and advancing efforts that truly make a difference in people's lives. Support for biomedical and behavioral research has long been a collaborative effort.

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Accordingly, the Friends of NIMH strongly encourages Congress to fully exercise its authority and responsibilities in this domain and beyond the President's budget request. We are concerned with the recent actions by the executive branch that have undermined Congress' bipartisan, bicameral investment in health research. The withdrawal of research grants will likely have unintended consequences. We call on Congress to ensure that any appropriated funding is spent as intended.

In closing, Chair Capito, Ranking Member Baldwin, and Members of the Subcommittee, the Friends of NIMH respectfully asks you to continue investing in NIH and NIMH as you consider FY 2026 appropriations. We believe that to fully address chronic disease as it relates to mental illness, we need to improve our understanding of the brain. We look forward to your consideration of this funding request.

Thank you for the opportunity to share the coalition's views.