April 10, 2017

The Honorable Roy Blunt
Chairman
Appropriations Subcommittee on Labor, Health and Human Services, Education, and Related Agencies
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Patty Murray
Ranking Member
Appropriations Subcommittee on Labor, Health and Human Services, Education, and Related Agencies
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Chairman Blunt and Ranking Member Murray:

The undersigned organizations are members of the Friends of NIDDK. We are a coalition of professional societies and patient advocacy groups with a commitment to promoting and sustaining the vital research activities of the National Institute of Diabetes and Digestive and Kidney Diseases (NIDDK) within the National Institutes of Health (NIH).

The Friends of NIDDK was established in 2013 with the vision of uniting organizations to speak with one voice about the important research being conducted by the Institute. On behalf of the Coalition, we would like to thank you for your efforts to increase funding for NIH and NIDDK in the Fiscal Year (FY) 2016 omnibus, as well as the Subcommittee’s FY 2017 request for an increase of nearly $80 million over FY 2016. We urge the House Appropriations Labor, Health and Human Services, and Education Subcommittee to support the Senate’s proposed level for FY 2017. The Friends of NIDDK respectfully requests $2.165 billion in FY 2018 for the Institute.

As you know, NIDDK has made numerous scientific advances through the Institute’s ongoing research, and robust federal funding is needed to spur future scientific initiatives. NIDDK conducts and supports medical research and research training for diabetes and other endocrine and metabolic diseases; digestive diseases, nutritional disorders, and obesity; as well as kidney, urologic, and hematologic diseases. Collectively these are some of the most common, yet costly, diseases impacting Americans.

For example, the nearly 116 million Americans that have diabetes and prediabetes cost the nation $322 billion in 2012 alone. About 26 million American adults have chronic kidney disease and millions of others are at increased risk, although NIH investments in kidney research are less than 1% of Medicare costs for kidney care. Recent Centers for Disease Control (CDC) data indicates that the prevalence of Crohn’s disease and ulcerative colitis, collectively known as inflammatory bowel disease (IBD), has nearly doubled over the past 15 years from 1.6 million to 3.3 million. These diseases cost more than $2.2 billion in direct and indirect costs annually. Urologic diseases affect people of all ages, result in significant health care expenditures, and may
lead to substantial disability and impaired quality of life. These diseases represent only a portion of the NIDDK research portfolio, but underscore the need for continued investment.

Research activities funded by NIDDK are utilizing innovative technology to discover cross-cutting solutions that will ultimately reduce health care costs and improve quality of life for millions of Americans. Some of the Institute’s most recent research has examined genetic variants, biomarkers, inter-organ nerve communication, artificial organ production, and many other exciting and ground-breaking issues that deserve continued support. With increased resources, NIDDK could implement a wide array of important research initiatives, which could prove invaluable in our understanding of these debilitating diseases.

Thank you for your consideration of our request. We look forward to working with you to support NIDDK. Should you have any questions or require additional information regarding the Friends of NIDDK, please contact the Friends of NIDDK’s Washington representative, Jim Twaddell, at Jim.Twaddell@dbr.com or (202) 230-5130.

Sincerely,

Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics
American Association of Kidney Patients (AAKP)
American Diabetes Association
American Gastroenterological Association
American Kidney Fund
American Nephrology Nurses Association
American Pancreatic Association
American Society for Bone and Mineral Research (ASBMR)
American Society for Gastrointestinal Endoscopy (ASGE)
American Society for Nutrition
American Society of Nephrology
American Society of Transplantation
American Urogynecologic Society (AUGS)
American Urological Association
Beyond Celiac – Formerly National Foundation For Celiac Awareness (NFCA)
Crohn’s & Colitis Foundation
Digestive Disease National Coalition
Global Liver Institute
Hepatitis Foundation International – Formerly Hepatitis B Foundation
IGA Nephropathy Foundation of America
International Foundation for Functional Gastrointestinal Disorders (IFFGD)
Interstitial Cystitis Foundation
JDRF (formerly Juvenile Diabetes Research Foundation)
National Kidney Foundation
NephCure Kidney International
North American Society for Pediatric Gastroenterology, Hepatology and Nutrition
Organic Acidemia Association
PKD Foundation