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October 14, 2011

The Honorable Patty Murray
The Honorable Jeb Hensarling
Co-Chairs, Joint Select Committee on Deficit Reduction
United States Congress
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Senator Murray and Representative Hensarling:

As the President of the Research Society on Alcoholism ("RSA"), I am writing to encourage you to ensure that no recommendations or legislative proposals advanced by the Joint Select Committee on Deficit Reduction result in a diminution in funding for the National Institutes of Health. RSA represents over 1700 scientists, clinicians, and trainees and is the largest research society committed to the study of alcohol, its physiological/medical effects, and the social and physical aspects of its overuse.

It is beyond quibble that NIH performs an indispensable governmental function by conducting, overseeing, and funding critical medical and health-related research which leads to breakthroughs in disease detection, prevention, and treatment. NIH's activities directly benefit millions of patients in the U.S. and around the world, creates a fertile environment for medical innovation, strengthens the country's scientific workforce and induces young investigators to engage in needed research. It also enhances the economic stability of the nation by supporting U.S. biotechnology, medical device, and pharmaceutical industries, and makes the country more competitive in the increasingly global economy.

The research conducted by RSA's members makes major contributions to public health. As the enclosed RSA "white paper" demonstrates, alcoholism and alcohol-related disease are serious conditions that affect the lives of millions of Americans, devastates families, compromises national preparedness, depresses economic vitality, and burdens the country's health care systems.

We are deeply concerned that any reduction in funding for NIH will appreciably decelerate research and sacrifice important progress in numerous areas including alcoholism and alcohol-related disease.

RSA appreciates the formidable task that lies before the Joint Committee but we ask that you keep our thoughts in mind as it discharges its mandate under the Budget Control Act.

Sincerely,

Mark S. Goldman, Ph.D.

cc:

The Honorable Max Baucus

The Honorable John Kerry

The Honorable Jon Kyl

The Honorable Rob Portman

The Honorable Pat Toomey

The Honorable Dave Camp

The Honorable Fred Upton

The Honorable Jim Clyburn

The Honorable Xavier Becerra

The Honorable Chris Van Hollen