

Congress Passes FY2005 Spending Bill with Increase for Medical Research Funding

On November 20, Congress passed the Fiscal Year (FY) 2005 Omnibus spending bill—a series of nine appropriations bills (including that for Labor, Health and Human Services, and Education, or LHHS) consolidated under HR4818, the Foreign Operations appropriations bill. To pay for any additional spending, the bill included a .8 percent across-the-board cut to the appropriated amounts for all non-defense, non-homeland security spending.

The FY2005 National Institutes of Health (NIH) appropriated amount (prior to the .8 percent cut) is \$28.6 billion. Applying the .8 percent cut, funding nets to \$28.4 billion, reflecting a 2 percent increase over FY2004. The FY2005 NEI appropriated amount (prior to the .8 percent cut) is \$674.6 million. Applying the .8 percent cut, funding nets to \$669 million, reflecting a 2.5 percent increase over FY2004.

Commenting on Congress' actions, NAEVR President Dr. Stephen Ryan stated, "Given the tight fiscal



James Jorkasky speaks with Bettilou Taylor, Majority Clerk of the Senate LHHS Subcommittee, who is often referred to as the "101st Senator" due to her dedicated service

environment, we commend the Appropriations leaders from both sides of the aisle for ensuring increases in federally-funded medical research. They are making a cost-effective investment that will result in treatments and therapies

to delay or prevent the onset of disease and improve the quality of life for all Americans."

While acknowledging that FY2005 NEI funding falls short of the budget-doubling goal of \$711 million (to bring it into parity with the budget-doubling that occurred overall at the NIH from FY1998-FY2003), NAEVR Executive Director James Jorkasky said that the Appropriators' actions were a "significant step to close the gap in eye and vision research funding," but added that, "since federal vision research spending is still less than one percent of the annual economic and societal cost of vision impairment of \$68 billion, NAEVR will continue to advocate for an increase in federally funded eye and vision research to deal with this major public health problem."

	FY2003 ACTUAL	FY2004 ACTUAL	FY2005 ACTUAL
NEI	\$632.3 M +9.2%	\$652.7 M +3.3%	\$669 M +2.5%
NIH	\$27.2 B +14.9%	\$28 B +3.1%	\$28.4 B +2%

SOURCE: NEI