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Eye and Vision Breakthroughs: Keep the Research Drive Alive!

October 20, 2008

Elias A. Zerhouni, M.D.
Director, National Institutes of Health (NIH)
Building 1, Room 126
1 Center Drive
Bethesda, Maryland 20892-0148

Dear Dr. Zerhouni:

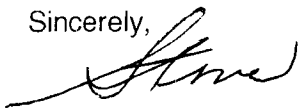
On behalf of the eye and vision community, I want to thank you for your exemplary leadership of the National Institutes of Health (NIH) these past six-plus years. Your tenure has been characterized by the utmost respect from the Administration, Congress, and the advocacy community for your unique ability to explain complex scientific concepts in understandable terms, especially as they relate to NIH priorities, accomplishments, and challenges. You have expertly navigated a funding environment that changed dramatically through the years, responding with novel approaches to maximize both resources and ultimate benefit to patients.

NAEVR especially appreciates the time that you took to meet with the vision community, especially with leading vision researchers prior to your keynote address at the 2005 ARVO annual meeting. NAEVR is also thankful for your inclusion of breakthrough National Eye Institute (NEI)-sponsored research in testimony before Congress and in speeches before the public. Your acknowledgment of NEI-funded research into age-related macular degeneration, ranging from discovery of AMD gene variants to the impact of antioxidant vitamins/minerals on AMD progression, has served an important public health role in educating Americans about the potential impact of this blinding eye disease.

I also want to thank you for your gracious recognition earlier this year of NAEVR/AEVR's 15th anniversary. I was pleased to have read your letter at the Capitol Hill reception.

We wish you the best for the future and are confident that you will continue to drive strategic discussions and provide national leadership in science, education, and health.

Sincerely,



Stephen J. Ryan, M.D.
President, NAEVR and AEVR Boards of Directors