Working with Congress

Myths and Facts

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Office of Legislation and Public Policy

- Legislative Liaison
- Public Liaison
- Public-Private Partnerships
- Controlled Correspondence
The Appropriations Process

Discretionary spending is subject to annual approval by Congress. Legislators have less control over mandatory spending, which is devoted to entitlement programs.

Myth
NIH staff can tell Congress how much money is needed to fund our research

Fact
The Anti-Lobbying Act prohibits Federal employees from using appropriated funds or resources to lobby Congress
Myth
NIH staff decide what directives Congress includes each year in the Appropriations Committee reports

Fact
NIH staff see the Committee reports/directives only when publicly posted
Myth
Congress regularly defunds specific NIH grants or programs of which it does not approve.

Fact
Because Congress makes annual appropriations, it can pass legislation defunding specific projects, but has only rarely
**Myth**

NICHD runs a coalition of research advocacy organizations to facilitate increased appropriations

**Fact**

The Friends of NICHD is a voluntary coalition, run by the organizations; NICHD staff provide information as needed
Myth
NIH staff can propose new legislation and suggest hearings

Fact
NIH staff can participate on request:
• Technical Assistance
• Questions for the Record
• Correspondence
**Myth**

New legislation that *authorizes* increases in funding for research means that NIH will receive new money for that area

**Fact**

Authorization bills only allow Congress to increase funding; the Appropriations Committees decide which areas will receive additional funds
Myth
Council members cannot contact Congress during their terms

Fact
As Special Government Employees, not during Council meetings; contact your institution’s government affairs office.
Questions?