DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES

NATIONAL INSTITUTES OF HEALTH

Hearing on FY 2018 National Institutes of Health Budget Request

Witness appearing before the

Senate Appropriations Subcommittee on Labor, HHS, Education, and Related Agencies

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Good morning, Chairman Blunt, Ranking Member Murray, and distinguished Members of the Subcommittee. I am Francis S. Collins, M.D., Ph.D., and I have served as the Director of the National Institutes of Health (NIH) since 2009. It is an honor to appear before you today, and it was a pleasure to host many of you at NIH earlier this month.

Before I discuss NIH's diverse investments in biomedical research and some of the exciting scientific opportunities on the horizon, I want to thank this Subcommittee for your Fiscal Year (FY) 2017 commitment to NIH.

scientists have worked to understand how the immune system functions at the molecular level. Now, thanks to a series of dramatic advances, we can not only watch the immune system at work, we can instruct it – "send it to school." In a recent breathtaking example, a young woman with widely metastatic breast cancer, whose cancer had failed to respond to several rounds of chemotherapy, enrolled in an experimental protocol at the NIH Clinical Center as a last hope. Her tumor genome was sequenced, and rare immune cells in her body with the potential to seek and destroy those cancer cells were identified. After those immune cells were massively expanded in the laboratory, and then unleashed to go after the cancer, her tumors started to recede within days. Now more than a year later, there is no evidence of any remaining cancer in her body. She is part of a revolution in cancer treatment, all made possible by years of dedicated basic research in fields like immunology and genomics.

So the future has never been brighter for advances in biomedical research than right now. Imagine what this feels like for a talented and curious new investigator. Early-stage investigators are responsible for many of the advances I've told you about today, and our future depends on them and their bright ideas. Those young men and women are thrilled by the prospect of exploration, and driven to help people. NIH is responsible for training these scientists, and for making sure that our investment in their careers, and the potential advances they will bring to patients, are sustained into the next stage. They are our most important resource. If advances in medical research are to continue, if research is to lead to breakthroughs that can reduce health care costs, if the considerable economic return on research is to continue, and if America is to continue its global leadership in biomedicine, we need to be sure this next generation has the confidence that there will be support for them. This is a priority for me.

The FY 2018 Budget provides $26.9 billion for NIH, which is $7.4 billion below the FY 2017 enacted level. The FY 2018 Budget eliminates the Fogarty International Center while retaining a total of $25 million in mission-critical international research and research related activities within the Office of Director. It includes $272 million in discretionary