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October 15, 2019

The Honorable Richard Shelby
Chairman
Senate Appropriations Committee
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Patrick Leahy
Vice Chairman
Senate Appropriations Committee
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Roy Blunt
Chairman
Senate Appropriations Subcommittee on Labor,
Health and Human Services, Education and
Related Agencies
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Patty Murray
Ranking Member
Senate Appropriations Subcommittee on Labor,
Health and Human Services, Education and
Related Agencies
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Chairman Shelby, Vice Chairman Leahy, Chairman Blunt, and Ranking Member Murray:

The 33 undersigned member organizations of the **National Coalition for Heart and Stroke Research** urge Congress to support the fight against heart disease, stroke, and other forms of cardiovascular disease (CVD) by adopting the following funding levels as you negotiate the differences in the FY 2020 Labor, HHS, Education, and Related Agencies Appropriations bill.

- \$42.08 billion for the National Institutes of Health (NIH), including:
 - \$3.69 billion for the National Heart, Lung, and Blood Institute (NHLBI);
 - \$2.49 billion for the National Institute of Neurological Disorders and Stroke (NINDS); and
- \$8.22 billion for the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), including:
 - \$160 million for the Division for Heart Disease and Stroke Prevention; and
 - \$46.7 million for the Well-Integrated Screening and Evaluation for Women Across the Nation – WISEWOMAN program.

Our coalition thanks Congress for its ongoing commitment to the **National Institutes of Health (NIH)** and providing it with an additional \$9 billion in funding over the last four years. Adoption of the Senate mark of \$42.08 billion for the NIH, including \$3.69 billion for NHLBI, and \$2.49 billion for NINDS will continue the momentum of robust, sustained, and predictable funding. This will allow the NIH to continue to restore its lost purchasing power and pursue promising biomedical research that will transform patient care and ultimately lead to a cure for heart disease and stroke.

In addition to NIH supported research, effective state, local and tribal-based prevention programs supported by the CDC are crucial to advance the fight against cardiovascular disease. The adoption of the House allocation of \$160 million for the **CDC's Division for Heart Disease and Stroke Prevention** will help improve the prevention, detection, treatment, and control of heart disease and stroke; enhance public health surveillance; support access to lifestyle improvement programs; increase public awareness of the warning signs of heart disease and stroke; and enhance systems of care for cardiovascular disease patients.

An allocation of \$46.7 million for the CDC's **WISEWOMAN** program will allow more women to benefit from this initiative that helps uninsured and under-insured low-income women ages 40 to 64 avoid heart disease and stroke, and offers preventive health services, referrals to local health care providers, and lifestyle counseling and interventions. Cardiovascular disease knows no borders and is the leading cause of death for women, our funding recommendation will allow the program to expand from 21 states and three tribal organizations to all 50 states and the District of Columbia.

Previous funding for cardiovascular disease research and prevention has led to significant declines in heart disease and stroke mortality rates, but the work is not complete. Cardiovascular disease stubbornly remains the leading cause of death and disability in the United States, affecting 121.5 million Americans and accounting for 1 in every 6 healthcare dollars spent. We encourage you to pass a bipartisan appropriations bill that invests in promising medical research and life-saving public health initiatives that puts us on a path to a world free of heart disease and stroke.

Respectfully,

Adult Congenital Heart Association· American Academy of Neurology· American Academy of Physical Medicine and Rehabilitation· American Association for Thoracic Surgery· American Association of Neurological Surgeons· American College of Cardiology· American College of Chest Physicians· American Heart Association· American Neurological Association· American Occupational Therapy Association· American Physical Therapy Association· American Society of Echocardiography· American Stroke Association· American Vascular Association Foundation· Association of Black Cardiologists· Child Neurology Society· Children's Cardiomyopathy Foundation, Inc.· Congress of Neurological Surgeons· Heart Failure Society of America· Heart Rhythm Society· Heart Valve Voice US· Hypertrophic Cardiomyopathy Association· Marfan Foundation· Mended Hearts, Inc.· Mended Little Hearts· Pediatric Congenital Heart Association· Society for Cardiovascular Angiography and Interventions· Society for Vascular Surgery· Society of Interventional Radiology· Sudden Arrhythmia Death Syndromes Foundation· Sudden Cardiac Arrest Association· Women's Heart Alliance· WomenHeart: The National Coalition for Women with Heart Disease