



Alliance for Taxpayer Access

September 7, 2004

United States Congress
U.S. Capitol
Washington, D.C. 20510

HARD COPY BY REGULAR MAIL

Dear Members of Congress:

The widespread dissemination of medical advances and scientific findings is critical to obtaining the best return possible on our nation's investment in research. Unfortunately, most Americans effectively do not have access to the results of research paid for with their tax dollars, including biomedical research conducted with National Institutes of Health (NIH) support. Today's technology is not being used optimally to facilitate the open and rapid exchange of publicly supported science within and across our borders.

The vast majority of federally-funded published research is available only through increasingly costly journal subscriptions (often costing thousands or tens of thousands of dollars annually), institutional license fees (more than a million dollars annually for many universities), or per-article purchases (often topping \$30 per article). This closed system leaves the American public -- including physicians, public health professionals, patients and patient groups, students, teachers, librarians and scientists at academic institutions, hospitals, research laboratories, and corporate research centers -- under-informed about important, timely research results they helped finance. In the age of the Internet, it is no longer acceptable that millions of Americans lack access to this credible, peer-reviewed research to inform their work, their studies and their personal healthcare decisions.

A first significant step toward addressing this problem has been proposed by the U.S. House of Representatives Labor, HHS & Education Subcommittee on Appropriations. In its FY 2005 report, the Committee asked NIH to develop a plan to place all peer-reviewed, NIH-funded research accepted for journal publication in PubMed Central (www.pubmedcentral.nih.gov), the free, publicly accessible, digital library maintained by the National Library of Medicine at NIH. We applaud this leadership. **When this provision is voted on and then negotiated in the conference committee, we ask you to ensure that its integrity and impact are preserved as part of the final report accompanying the FY 2005 Labor, HHS & Education Appropriations bill.**

This is a smart and timely solution to a mounting public issue. Open access to taxpayer-funded research results enhances agency accountability and lays the groundwork for the accelerated exchange and application of knowledge across scientific disciplines. It recognizes that broad access to information about scientific advances is an inseparable component of our investment in the research enterprise. It enables the American public to better recognize and more fully make use of the fruits of the research they funded.

Please join the undersigned in the pursuit of open access to taxpayer-funded research.

Sincerely,

AIDS Action Baltimore
AIDS Vaccine Advisory Coalition
American Association of Law Libraries
American Library Association
American Medical Student Association
Arthritis Foundation
Asian and Pacific Islander American Health Forum
Association of Academic Health Sciences Libraries
Association of College & Research Libraries
Association of Maternal and Child Health Programs
Association of Research Libraries
Association of Southeastern Research Libraries
Autosomal Recessive Polycystic Kidney Disease and Congenital Hepatic Fibrosis Alliance
Barth Syndrome Foundation
Boston College Libraries
Christopher Reeve Paralysis Foundation
Coalition for Heritable Disorders of Connective Tissue
Colorado State University
Conquer Fragile X Syndrome
Down Syndrome Treatment and Research Foundation
Eastern Kentucky University Libraries
Facing Our Risk of Cancer Empowered
Genetic Alliance
Global Neuroscience Initiative Foundation
International Mosaic Down Syndrome Association
IsoDicentric 15 Exchange, Advocacy & Support
Medical Education Online
Medical Library Association
Mycosis Fungoides Foundation
National Alliance for Autism Research
National Coalition for PKU & Allied Disorders
National Fragile X Foundation
National Tay-Sachs & Allied Diseases Association, Inc.
New England Biolabs
Oberlin College
Parent Project Muscular Dystrophy
Prader-Willi Syndrome Association
Public Knowledge
Public Library of Science (PLOS)
Pseudoxanthoma Elasticum (PXE) International
Scholarly Publishing and Academic Resources Coalition
Special Libraries Association
Spina Bifida Association of America
Tourette Syndrome Association
University of Colorado at Boulder - University Libraries
University of Connecticut Libraries
University of Kansas
University of New Hampshire
University of Wisconsin-Madison Libraries
University of Wisconsin-Oshkosh
Wayne State University College of Nursing