



January 28, 2019

Hon. Kirsty Duncan
Minister of Science and Sport
House of Commons
Ottawa, Ontario
K1A 0A6

Dear Minister Duncan,

On behalf of Research Canada: *An Alliance for Health Discovery*, we would like to thank the Government of Canada for the important investments it has made in Canadian health research and health innovation over the past four years. We would also like to express our appreciation to you, Minister, for your exemplary leadership and your commitment to both our enterprise and to the researchers from coast to coast who are dedicated to improving the health and well-being of all Canadians.

Research Canada's Members, Supporters and Partners welcomed Federal Budget 2018's nearly \$4 billion historic investment in Canada's research system to support the work of researchers and to provide our community with state-of-the-art facilities. We were also delighted with Budget 2018's three-year, \$11.5 million proposal to reform the regulatory process in support of innovation and business investment; this initiative sends the right signals to our health and bioscience sector, which is an important contributor to Canada's innovation economy.

The recent announcement of a New Frontiers in Research Fund (NFRF) which will invest \$275 million over the next five years, and \$65 million ongoing, to fund international, interdisciplinary, fast-breaking and high-risk research, demonstrates the government's strong and on-going commitment to our research enterprise.

At the same time, we wanted to share with you the concerns our Members, Supporters and Partners have expressed to us regarding the cancellation of the Networks of Centres of Excellence Program, a widely respected program supporting diverse and collaborative networks of investigators at all career stages and with a stellar track record of enabling innovative research on its way to the market or clinic.

While our Alliance respects the Government of Canada's right to cancel, redesign and create programs within its authority, we and our stakeholders have the impression that no formal and meaningful consultation aimed at collecting and analyzing information about the NCE program's activities, characteristics and outcomes, was undertaken before announcing its cancellation.

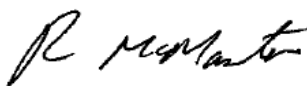
The apparent absence of a transparent and evidence-based evaluative process has unfortunately fomented some anxiety within the health research community and concern that this may be a harbinger of how future decisions will be made about federal research programs.

Research Canada has taken steps to speak with representatives from your offices, who have assured us that the government is doing everything it can to capitalize on the best components of the NCE Program by consulting with these Networks and supporting them in finding alternate project funding. While this is a positive step, it has come to our attention that this plan has not been formally communicated to NCEs, and many therefore remain in limbo and unaware of the government's intention to ensure that public investments in this 30-year program will not be forsaken.

Research Canada views the Government of Canada as our Partner in fulfilling our shared vision to build a world-leading research and innovation system incubating global scientific leaders and setting the international standard for excellence.

It is in this spirit that we are sharing the important feedback we have received from our community. We have great confidence that we can work together to address these concerns and continue to work constructively with the Government of Canada in strengthening Canada's research and science base and investing in the health research that will fuel the next generation of innovations, create new industries, spur job creation and fuel economic growth.

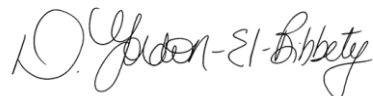
Sincerely,



Dr. Robert McMaster
Chair



Dr. Ryan Wiley
Policy Advisor
Chair, Policy Engagement
Committee



Ms. Deborah Gordon-El-Bihbety
President and CEO

cc: Dr. Rose Goldstein
Vice-Chair