

**NEWS****Opinion**

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**Funding cuts would hurt medical research**

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“Sequestration” and “fiscal cliff” are opaque policy terms that obscure the real harm that will come to our community if their cuts are not avoided. They refer to across-the-board cuts to the federal budget, including medical research funding through the National Institutes of Health, set to take effect on Jan. 2.

As a graduate student in neurophysics at Washington University, I have witnessed first-hand the advances made possible by NIH funding. However, an already tight funding environment means that roughly 90 percent of research proposals to NIH are being rejected. Many of these applications are submitted by top researchers seeking solutions to some of our most devastating and costly health problems. Reduced funding availability keeps good scientists from working on research and forces them to waste eons writing grant applications instead of research papers, putting further distance between patients and cures. Sequestration’s severe cuts to the NIH budget would exacerbate these problems, decreasing our ability to improve the health and welfare of Americans.

NIH also cornerstones a robust medical industry here in Missouri, and in 2011 alone provided the state with \$477 million in funding and supported 7,489 jobs. Nationwide, sequestration cuts are estimated to destroy 30,000 jobs and \$4.5 billion in economic activity.

NIH research funding is an investment in our nation’s future health and economic well-being, but Congress and the president have little time to adopt a fiscal policy that continues the tradition of broad bipartisan support for biomedical research.

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