



November 28, 2016

The Honorable Paul Ryan
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Nancy Pelosi
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Mitch McConnell
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Harry Reid
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Speaker Ryan, Leader Pelosi, Leader McConnell, and Leader Reid:

As leader of the Lupus and Allied Diseases Association, longtime autoimmune advocate, and an individual personally managing multiple autoimmune conditions, I would like to applaud you in your efforts to accelerate the discovery, development, and delivery of promising new treatments and cures with the 21st Century Cures Act or H.R. 34. I truly appreciate your inclusion of provisions for advancing patient-focused drug development, streamlining the regulatory process, and funding critical initiatives that will improve quality of life by ensuring therapies reach those who desperately need them.

The Lupus and Allied Diseases Association, Inc., is a passion driven, all-volunteer patient advocacy organization dedicated to improving quality of life for those impacted by lupus and allied diseases and conditions of unmet need by fostering collaboration among all stakeholders and promoting innovative advocacy, awareness and biomedical research program initiatives. We are committed to fostering collaboration among stakeholders in order to encourage patient-centered care and ensure public policy keeps pace with biomedical research innovation.

For anyone trying to survive with a complex, chronic and/or rare conditions access to appropriate medication can dramatically improve disease outcome and quality of life. Effective treatment can reduce the severity and frequency of disease activity and decelerate its progression, circumvent debilitating symptoms, and avoid complications and long-term disability, thus enabling individuals to remain productive. Simply put, access to innovative therapies matters to patients and their treating providers.

As patient stakeholders who represent individuals struggling to manage complicated, devastating, unpredictable, and potentially fatal diseases of unmet need like Lupus and those who love, advocate for, and treat them on a daily basis, we support H.R. 34 as it facilitates bringing drugs and devices to market more quickly and at less cost by making needed reforms to the FDA, including: expedited review for breakthrough devices, increased patient involvement in the drug approval process, and a streamlined review process for combination products that are both a drug and device.

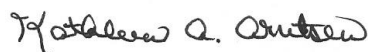
We also support the proposed funding for vital research initiatives and institutes such as: \$1.8 billion for Cancer Moonshot to hasten cancer research, \$1.5 billion for the BRAIN initiative to expand our knowledge of diseases like Alzheimer's and improve diagnosis and advance treatment, \$1.5 billion for the president's Precision Medicine Initiative to propel research into the genetic, lifestyle and environmental variations of disease, \$4.8 billion to the National Institutes of Health, and \$500 million to the Food and Drug Administration. We are thrilled that the initiative would address the country's mental health crisis by guaranteeing that Americans suffering from mental illness and substance abuse disorders receive the care they need and provides for \$1 billion in grants to states to address the opioid crisis.

As Americans, now more than ever, as we usher in an era of personalized health care, we must recognize that public policy decisions have direct implications on the development of new and safer therapies. Drug research and development needs to be encouraged and supported and not stifled by bureaucracies so that all individuals, regardless of race or socioeconomic status can live longer and healthier lives.

On behalf of the Lupus and Allied Diseases Association and the millions of Americans struggling to manage autoimmune conditions like lupus and other diseases of unmet need and those who love them and care for them, I passionately urge you to support H.R. 34. This landmark legislation will finally transform our dreams for more efficacious, safe and innovative treatments, and cures into reality. It is imperative that this initiative moves forward so that patients like me have access to lifesaving and life-enhancing therapies and hope for the future.

Thank you very much for listening to all of the patient voices across this amazing country, now please let's get this done.

Sincerely-



Kathleen A. Arntsen
President/CEO
Lupus and Allied Diseases Association, Inc.
315-264-9101

Cc: Representative Fred Upton
Representative Frank Pallone
Senator Lamar Alexander
Senator Patty Murray