

The National Center for Medical Rehabilitation Research (NCMRR) within the Eunice Kennedy Shriver National Institute of Child Health and Human Development (NICHD) is leading federal disability and rehabilitation research at the National Institutes of Health (NIH).

WHY SUPPORTING NCMRR MATTERS

Over 61 Million Americans Living with Disabilities

As our population ages and more people live with chronic conditions, the demand for medical rehabilitation research grows. Investments in rehabilitation science drive innovations in assistive technology, therapeutic interventions, neuroplasticity, mobility, and independence—supporting patients recovering from stroke, spinal cord injury, traumatic brain injury, and more.

Leading Rehabilitation Research at NIH

Through basic, translational, and clinical research, NCMRR fosters development of scientific knowledge needed to enhance the health, productivity, independence, and quality of life of people with physical disabilities by funding investigators and coordinating across NIH.

Coordinating \$900 Million Annually in Rehabilitation Research Across NIH

Despite the broad reach and urgent need for rehabilitation research, NCMRR represents a small fraction of NIH's budget. Sustained investment will:

- Accelerate scientific discoveries that improve patient outcomes and reduce long-term disability
- Enhance coordination of rehabilitation research across NIH and federal agencies
- Support interdisciplinary research that addresses the complex needs of individuals with disabilities

NCMRR-Supported Research

- Development of brain-computer interface systems that allow individuals with paralysis to regain communication or mobility
- Rehabilitation strategies that reduce hospital readmissions and improve functional outcomes post-stroke
- Innovative pediatric rehabilitation therapies that support healthy development for children with disabilities

Legislative History

In 1990, Congress passed the *NIH Amendments Act* (P.L. 101-613) to establish NCMRR to lead medical rehabilitation research, including orthotics and prosthetics research, and disseminate health information about rehabilitation of individuals with physical disabilities resulting from diseases or disorders of the neurological, musculoskeletal, cardiovascular, and pulmonary systems.

We urge Congress to continue funding for NICHD/NCMRR to advance innovation, improve outcomes, and foster independence for Americans with disabilities.

Recent discussions in Congress and within the Department of Government Efficiency have raised questions about the structure of the NIH, its funding priorities, and, more specifically, the disability research agenda. DRRC offers the following principles we encourage policymakers to consider as they address these critical issues in the coming months and years.

1. Promoting Opportunity



Ensure that disability and rehabilitation research upholds the principle of equal opportunity for individuals with disabilities, supporting efforts to eliminate barriers to full participation in society. *Research should focus on empowering individuals to achieve self-sufficiency and thrive in a competitive society, without unnecessary government dependence.*

2. Individual Solutions for Optimal Outcomes



Emphasize research that supports autonomy, ensuring that people with disabilities have the freedom to choose the services and solutions that best meet their needs. *Research should focus on enhancing personal independence and offering practical solutions that allow individuals to contribute fully to their communities and the economy.*

3. Private Sector Innovation and Public-Private Partnerships



Encourage collaboration between the federal government, private sector businesses, and nonprofit organizations to foster innovation in disability and rehabilitation research. *By leveraging the expertise and resources of the private sector, our nation can drive the development of cost-effective and cutting-edge solutions for individuals with disabilities.*

4. Evidence-Based Practices with Fiscal Responsibility



Promote research that is rooted in sound scientific evidence and demonstrates tangible, real-world benefits for individuals with disabilities. *Research should focus on cost-effective interventions that prioritize the responsible use of taxpayer dollars while delivering long-term value and positive outcomes for individuals and communities.*

5. Practical and Accessible Solutions



Focus on developing practical, accessible, and affordable solutions that improve the quality of life for individuals with disabilities. *Research should prioritize outcomes that promote health and wellness, enable people with disabilities to live independently, contribute to the workforce, and access the same opportunities as their peers, without unnecessary government mandates or excessive regulations.*

6. Focus on Long-Term Outcomes and Independence



Direct research on improving the long-term outcomes of individuals with disabilities, focused on enhancing independent living and community participation. *Research should focus on the effectiveness of interventions across the lifespan, from early childhood to aging, and ensuring that these interventions promote enduring self-sufficiency and quality of life.*