



Ohio Ophthalmological Society

Eye MDs & Surgeons Dedicated to Preserving Vision

August 6, 2025

Dear Ohio Congressional Delegation Member:

On behalf of the Ohio Ophthalmological Society, we are writing to express concern with a proposal to consolidate the National Eye Institute (NEI) into a broader National Institute of Neuroscience & Brain Research. Our society represents 450 eye physicians and surgeons and the thousands of patients that they treat each year. Congress established the NEI in 1968 with the explicit goal of prioritizing vision science research to address sight-threatening eye diseases and vision disorders. The creation of the NEI was a turning point in the treatment of eye disease, and we urge you and your colleagues to reaffirm Congress' long-standing bipartisan investment in vision research by rejecting these consolidation proposals and maintaining an independent NEI.

By 2050, without effective interventions, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) estimates there will be a 72% increase in diabetic retinopathy, an 87% increase in cataracts, a 100% increase in glaucoma, a 100% increase in age-related macular degeneration, and a 150% increase in vision impairment and blindness. Our members treat patients with these and other sight-threatening eye diseases and visual impairments every day, and they believe that an independent NEI is critical for the continued advancement of treatments, novel diagnostics, and new technology to improve the eye and vision health of their patients.

Additionally, NEI currently supports community screening programs, school-based vision care, and mobile diagnostic platforms. The consolidation of NEI would certainly threaten these programs and, subsequently, the visual health of children in our state and in others.

Over the past 50 years, public investment in vision research has paid remarkable dividends as many eye diseases can now be treated with sight-saving therapies that stabilize or even reverse vision loss. The proposed consolidation of the NEI into a larger institute threatens our tremendous progress and the patient community in our state that relies on the NEI's leadership to spearhead cutting-edge vision research.

We urge Congress to protect an independent NEI and join us and the broader vision community in continuing to support research that benefits the thousands of patients that our members treat. Please do not hesitate to contact us if you have any questions on this important issue.

Sincerely,

Aleksandra Rachitskaya

President, Ohio Ophthalmological Society

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