

Health Care News And Notes



Medical Progress For The Future

(NAPSA)—The ability of the United States to solve major health challenges like Ebola or the Enterovirus D68, or find cures for other deadly or disabling diseases like cancer or Alzheimer's, could depend on what you do in the voting booth.

That's because, when armed with information about your candidates' views, you can make voting decisions that will help determine the speed of U.S. medical progress.

Here's where the Ask Your Candidates! (AYC!) initiative comes in. Established by Research!America, a nonprofit organization working to make medical research a higher national priority, the nonpartisan Ask Your Candidates! initiative helps voters gain insight into the priority their candidates place on accelerating research to combat known illnesses or emerging threats that devastate families or become public health crises.

Funding Medical Research

There are two main sources of funding for medical research, and they are both crucial to achieving medical progress: federal support and private-sector investment. Congress has significant influence over both: 1) it determines annual funding levels for publicly supported research at universities, academic health centers and other institutions, and 2) it crafts laws affecting the return on private-sector investment in medical research and development.

Because few businesses can attract investors for pre-commercial science, Americans have traditionally devoted about 1 percent of health care tax dollars to financing basic research, which paves the way for better diagnostic tools, treatments and cures.

Empowering Voters

Research!America and a team of national partners are spearheading an initiative that encourages voters to reach out to their candidates through e-mail, Twitter or Facebook and ask them to comment on the future of medical progress. A link on the AYC! website enables voters to personalize and send an e-mail to their candi-



With the help of the Ask Your Candidates! initiative, voters can ensure that they elect candidates that represent their family's medical needs.

dates. Voters can also view candidate responses on the site.

Some voters have asked about their candidates' support for research to fight cancer or another illness; others have asked broader questions, such as:

- Where does speeding up medical progress fit among your priorities for Congress?
- How will you encourage innovations that improve the health of Americans?
- Does Congress do enough to support science that leads to treatments and cures for disabling and deadly diseases?
- Is enough medical research done on helping wounded warriors?
- Government investment in medical research is dropping. Do you think that's right?
- Most private-sector medical research occurs in the United States, where it creates jobs and exports. Should keeping it here be a priority?

There is no "good" or "bad" question from voters. And there is no "right" or "wrong" response from candidates. AYC!'s purpose isn't to endorse an answer or candidate; voters and candidates alike hold a diversity of views on the relative importance of medical progress and how to best achieve it.

Taking The Next Step

Whether you are a voter or a candidate, you can visit the website at www.askyourcandidates.org to get involved. It could be your involvement that makes a difference.