



2021 DRRC Policy and Advocacy Priorities

I. COVID-19 DISABILITY, INDEPENDENT LIVING, AND REHABILITATION RESEARCH

Continue to advocate for enhanced disability, independent living, and rehabilitation research relating to the COVID-19 pandemic, including data collection and targeted research for key populations.

- Work with the 117th Congress and the Biden Administration to ensure that the federal response to the pandemic includes targeted research on the inequitable impact of COVID-19 on people with disabilities.
- Ensure that the COVID-19 research agenda includes examination of the “ripple effects” on access to services, health, and independent function not directly resulting from COVID-19 infection.
- Ensure that federal data collection efforts include critical disability status information to inform the federal pandemic response.
- Promote disability considerations as research agencies develop and carry out their strategic plans and efforts regarding COVID-19 research.

II. NATIONAL INSTITUTES OF HEALTH (NIH)

Advocate for expanded medical rehabilitation research at NIH.

- Follow up with senior NIH leaders with whom DRRC has already engaged and maintain a close working relationship with key NIH staff.
- Meet with additional NIH leaders at Institutes and Centers relevant to the DRRC’s mission, including the National Institute of Mental Health (NIMH) and the National Institute of Minority Health and Health Disparities (NIMHD).
- Continue to engage with new personnel at the National Center for Medical Rehabilitation Research (NCMRR) to ensure a continued and strong relationship between the DRRC and the Center.
- Engage with the Biden Administration to continue to raise the profile of disability, independent living, and rehabilitation research at NIH.
- Participate in future public comment opportunities to weigh in on the direction of NIH-Wide and Institute-specific strategic planning processes.

III. NATIONAL INSTITUTE ON DISABILITY, INDEPENDENT LIVING, AND REHABILITATION RESEARCH (NIDILRR)

Advocate in support of NIDILRR and its research mission.

- Encourage the Biden Administration to appoint a qualified and dynamic leader to head NIDILRR and re-emphasize the Institute's position as a key federal body supporting disability, independent living, and rehabilitation research.
- Advocate for increased funding for NIDILRR's operations in the FY 2022 appropriations cycle.
- Continue to monitor and help facilitate the implementation of the 2018-2023 NIDILRR Long-Range Plan.
- Meet with NIDILRR leadership (once appointed) and Administration for Community Living (ACL) officials to reaffirm commitment to disability, independent living, and rehabilitation research.
- Work to more closely involve NIDILRR in CMS activities, especially regarding the role that NIDILRR's data and disability expertise may play in improving the Medicare and Medicaid programs.

IV. FISCAL YEAR (FY) 2022 APPROPRIATIONS

Advocate for additional funding and applicable report language to support DRRC goals.

- Solicit membership for priority programs and prepare DRRC appropriations and report language recommendations.
- Advocate before congressional appropriations leadership to support DRRC budget requests (including consideration of a potential dedicated budget for ICDR).
- Meet with relevant agency and administration officials as appropriate regarding budget needs.
- Prepare charts summarizing President's budget proposals and House/Senate/Conference funding decisions and accompanying analyses.

V. OTHER FEDERAL AGENCIES

Promote the coordination and enhancement of disability, independent living, and rehabilitation research across the federal government.

- Continue to advocate with ACL and the leadership of the Interagency Committee on Disability Research (ICDR) to promote the implementation of the government-wide strategic plan on disability, independent living, and rehabilitation research and encourage commitment to the ICDR's mission.
- Engage with the appropriate leaders at the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) to re-appoint a Chief Disability and Health Officer and re-establish the Disability and Health Working Group.
- Advocate before key officials and work in tandem with the research community to address next steps to restore CDC's view of disability and rehabilitation research.
- Engage with the Patient-Centered Outcomes Research Institute (PCORI) to support further emphasis on disability and rehabilitation research within the Institute's portfolio.