



The Honorable Kay Granger
Chair
United States House
Committee on Appropriations
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Robert Aderholt
Chair
United States House
Appropriations Subcommittee on Labor,
Health and Human Services, Education,
and Related Agencies
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Rosa DeLauro
Ranking Member
United States House
Appropriations Subcommittee on Labor,
Health and Human Services, Education,
and Related Agencies
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Brett Guthrie
Chair
United States House
Committee on Energy and Commerce -
Subcommittee on Health
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Larry Bucshon, MD
Vice Chair
United States House
Committee on Energy and Commerce –
Subcommittee on Health
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Anna Eshoo
Ranking Member
United States House
Committee on Energy and Commerce –
Subcommittee on Health
Washington, DC 20515

November 6, 2023

Re: Anti-Vascular Endothelial Growth Factor (Anti-VEGF) Therapy Achievements through Vision Research

Dear Chair Granger, Chair Aderholt, Chair Guthrie, Vice Chair Bucshon, and Ranking Members DeLauro and Eshoo:

I write to you in my role as the President of the Association for Research and Vision in Ophthalmology (ARVO) to share with you the tremendous success that anti-VEGF treatments have had and the importance of vision research in developing new treatments and therapies.

[ARVO](http://ARVO.org) is the largest and most respected eye and vision research organization in the world. Our members include nearly 10,000 researchers from over 75 countries and our mission is to advance research worldwide into understanding the visual system and preventing, treating, and curing its disorders.

Many Americans live with eye conditions that severely impact their quality of life. The U.S. has a history of providing support and funding to scientists dedicated to studying these diseases and interventions to delay or even prevent vision loss. One notable success that I would like to highlight was the development of anti-vascular endothelial growth factor (VEGF) therapy that was supported by grants from the National Institutes of Health (NIH). Anti-VEGF therapy has been transformative as it slows vision loss and improves vision for patients with a range of conditions, including age-related macular degeneration, macular edema, and diabetic retinopathy. There are more than 2.5 million injections of anti-VEGF treatments administered annually in the United States. In light of the growing prevalence of AMD and diabetic retinopathy which are expected to double by 2050, this treatment is of particular relevance.

I want to thank you for the Committee's bipartisan support for the National Institutes of Health (NIH), and specifically, the National Eye Institute (NEI) over the past several years. Without the foundational research supported by the NEI, the development and use of anti-VEGF treatments would not have been possible.

ARVO is highlighting this achievement through a [short video series and educational resources](#) describing the development of this treatment, its positive impact on patients' lives, future applications, and the significant return on taxpayer investment. I encourage you to learn more about this transformative therapy and discover how investments in eye and vision research are shaping the healthcare landscape for the better and would appreciate it if you could share this video with your colleagues, and perhaps even your constituents who would be gratified to see this effective use of their tax dollars.

I urge the Committee to continue to support NIH funding increases, specifically funding beyond a base-level increase for the National Eye Institute. With an aging population, it is projected that the incidence of glaucoma, AMD, and diabetic retinopathy will double by 2050. Additionally, more than 50% of the world's population is expected to be myopic (nearsighted) by 2050. We are experiencing a growing epidemic of vision impairment and vision loss and with your support, we can continue to build on successful achievements like anti-VEGF treatments as we work to prevent, save, and potentially restore vision in the future.

Thank you in advance for your time and consideration. If you have any questions, please contact me at patricia_damore@meei.harvard.edu or Salewa Akintilo, Assistant Director of Science Communications and Initiatives, at sakintilo@arvo.org or 240-221-2927.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Patricia A. D'Amore".

Patricia A. D'Amore, PhD, MBA, FARVO

President of ARVO
Associate Chief of Basic and Translational Research
Schepens Eye Research Institute of Mass. Eye & Ear, Boston,
Charles L. Schepens Professor of Ophthalmology & Professor of Pathology
Harvard Medical School
Boston, Mass.