

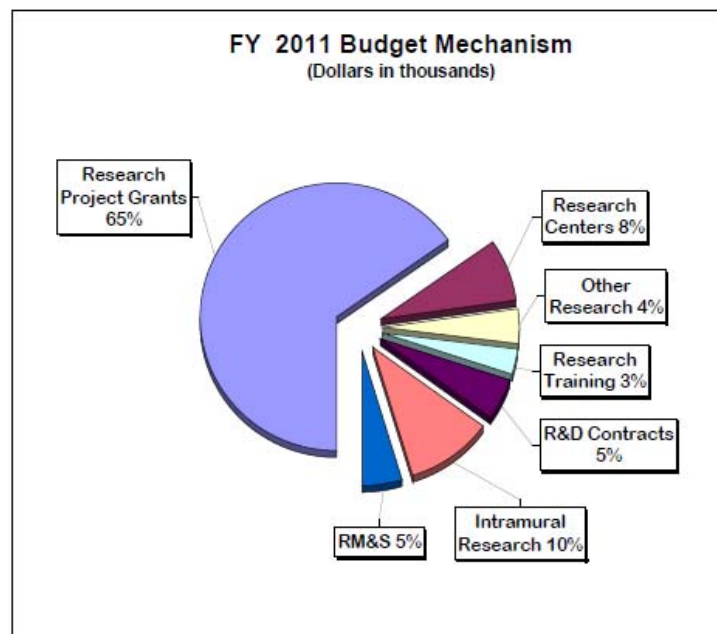
FY 2011 National Institutes of Health Budget

On Monday, February 1 President Obama released his FY2011 budget recommendations to Congress. While the President's budget does articulate the political and economic goals and priorities of the Executive Branch, it is important to remember that the President does not have the power to actually set spending levels for the federal government: the Constitution places control of the country's purse strings exclusively with the U.S. Congress.

Depending on the power relationship between Congress and the White House, Congress may choose to enact the spending levels laid out in the President's budget as is or to ignore the President's suggestions. As can be expected, when the same party controls the White House and both chambers of Congress, as currently is the case, the President's budget is likely to have more sway. Conversely, when the White House and Congress are at odds, the President's budget can be the worst predictor for federal funding levels.

The combined FY11 budget allotted for the Department of Labor (DOL) and the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) is nearly \$1 billion greater than the amount passed in the FY09 Omnibus bill with the FY11 budget proposing over \$32 billion in discretionary funding to DOL and HHS. This increased investment in research and technology demonstrates a clear focus by the President to address some of the major health issues that face our nation.

Of particular importance to the OIF is the suggested funding level for the National Institute of Arthritis and Musculoskeletal and Skin Diseases (NIAMS), which falls under the National Institutes of Health and provides all federal research dollars for *osteogenesis imperfecta*. President Obama's FY11 budget proposes \$555,715,000 for NIAMS, an increase of nearly \$17 million over the 2009 Omnibus. Just over half of that – nearly \$363 million – is allocated for research project grants; a figure that, if accepted by Congress, would increase the annual grants that NIAMS is able to offer to over 1,200. The following graph shows the percentage of NIAMS funding that will go to research project grants, research centers, research training, and other programs that benefit those diseases covered by NIAMS:



According to the funding justification included in the President's budget document, the goal of NIAMS in FY11 is to build upon its current clinical research infrastructure by implementing a strategy to address pressing questions about how to translate basic science discoveries into treatments. Much of the research that NIAMS will be conducting is highly relevant to patients with OI. For example, the FY11 budget proposes \$9.2 million just for Genome-Wide Association Studies, which aim to study the health problems that are caused by genetic susceptibility with the ultimate goal of reaching a cure. Researchers are making huge strides in this area of study, as shown by the NIH discovery of a new gene that accounts for previously unexplained forms of OI; this was released *less than two weeks ago*. The full new release can be reached here: <http://www.nih.gov/news/health/jan2010/nichd-20.htm>.

The FY11 budget proposes \$122 million that would be used specifically for research and treatment of Musculoskeletal Biology and Diseases. Programs funded by this proposed increase would support the development of new technologies, including methods of imaging bone and cartilage to improve the diagnosis and treatment of skeletal disorders and facilitate repair of damage caused by trauma to otherwise healthy musculoskeletal tissue. Additionally, the President has asked that the Bone Biology and Diseases program receive \$72.5 million in FY11, over a 3% increase from FY10. This program specifically addresses regulation of bone remodeling; bone formation, bone resorption, and mineralization and the effects of hormones, growth factors, and cytokines on bone cells; all of which may benefit those with OI.

If upheld by Congress, the proposed funding for FY11 would allow OI-related research and OI-related grant opportunities to be expanded in the coming years. To learn more about the budget and what it covers, please join the OIF advocacy team by emailing oifadvocacy@wscdc.com. As a member of OIF Advocacy, you will receive frequent and detailed updates on healthcare reform and other pertinent Washington issues.