

Life-saving innovation in S.A.

Sustained funding needed to continue biomedical activity.

As a relatively new member of the San Antonio community, I continue to marvel at the scientific vitality of this city. In the biomedical, cyber-security, and clean energy sectors, innovation is spawning better clinical care, computer security and more efficient use of natural resources.

Focusing on my particular area of interest, biomedicine, several important assets make this sector the largest economic driver in the city, generating \$24 billion of annual activity and accounting for one of every six jobs. Among these assets are a vibrant group of basic and translational research organizations that generate significant and patentable discoveries; homegrown industry leaders such as KCI, DPT Labs and Mission Pharmacal, along with emerging bioscience companies like Vidacare, ENTrigue Surgical, and **Conceptual MindWorks**; city and county officials who understand and support economic development; a culture of collaboration among the major research organizations including UTSA, UT Health Science Center, Southwest Research Institute and Texas Biomedical Research Institute; professionally managed research parks that have land



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available at reasonable prices; and very sophisticated clinical evaluation of new therapies by our many fine hospitals and physicians.

While people think of Houston and Dallas as "destination cities" for certain kinds of medical care, San Antonio has world-renowned clinical, research and business resources in diabetes, trauma and wound care, cancer, neurological disorders, infectious diseases and many other conditions. Just look at a sampling of the innovations taking place here:

■ New and nonaddictive pain control developed at the UT Health Science Center as well as startling breakthroughs in moderating some of the more devastating effects of aging at the Barshop Institute for Longevity and Aging Studies;

■ Very significant neurological studies at UTSA on the factors leading to memory loss and an important new vaccine candidate against chlamydia, the most prevalent sexually transmitted illness, developed at UTSA and UT Health Science Center;

■ Exciting nanotechnology studies at Southwest Research

Institute that provide new avenues for drug delivery in many diseases, as well as new approaches, in collaboration with Texas Biomedical Research Institute, in assessing and predicting damage to bones caused by osteoporosis and arthritis; and

■ Innovative biological surveillance techniques for identifying bio-terror agents as well as novel genetic analysis of the origins of diabetes, cardiovascular disease and other illnesses at Texas Biomedical Research Institute.

Innovation that saves lives around the world is emerging from San Antonio. A linchpin in the success of this scientific and clinical productivity is federal funding that comes here through the National Institutes of Health (NIH). While our nation needs to make difficult decisions on debt reduction, the NIH is key to economic development and clinical innovation, at the local and national levels.

Without sustained NIH funding, talented scientists, doctors and entrepreneurs may give up on promising research and development projects and the health advances that will help people everywhere. San Antonio relies on NIH and so do we all.

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