



September 19, 2007

Robert Shapiro, M.D.
University of Vermont
College of Medicine - Neurology
1256 Whalley Road
Charlotte, VT 05445

Dear Bob:

The National Headache Foundation (NHF) is pleased to participate in the Headache on the Hill (HOH) initiative to increase National Institutes of Health (NIH) funding for headache research. Established in 1970, the NHF exists to enhance the healthcare of headache sufferers. It is a source of help to sufferers' families, physicians who treat headache sufferers, allied healthcare professionals and to the public. The NHF accomplishes its mission by – providing educational and informational resources, supporting headache research and advocating for the understanding of headache as a legitimate neurobiological disease.

For 37 years, we have worked on behalf of the nearly 45 million Americans who live with headache. Headache is responsible for 9% of all labor productivity lost in the United States, totaling nearly \$20 billion per year. Migraine is the most prevalent *disabling* neurological disorder with 12% of the U.S. population experiencing this disease. One in every four households has a migraine sufferer. We know that nearly half of all migraine sufferers are undiagnosed and of those who are diagnosed nearly half are misdiagnosed as having tension-type or sinus headache. Seventy percent of migraine sufferers are women and the disease runs in families.

Migraine is a quality-of-life altering disease. A majority of all migraine sufferers (53 percent) characterize their pain as causing either severe impairment or forcing them to retreat to their beds, sometimes for days at a time. More than half (51 percent) of sufferers report a 50 percent or more reduction in work and/or school productivity; 67 percent report a 50 percent or more reduction in household work productivity.

Yet, NIH grants for migraine total approximately \$13M per year, representing less than .05% of the total NIH budget. Very little headache research apart from migraine is funded and the NIH has no institute, center, or study section wholly devoted to pain, let alone headache disorders. Compared to asthma, NIH funding for migraine is:

- 21 times less overall
- 27 times less - relative to its contribution to U.S. economic costs
- 37 times less - relative to its prevalence in the U.S. population
- 13 times less - relative to its contribution to U.S. disability burden

This is why the NHF is committed to working with the other organizations participating in the HOH initiative to increase NIH funding for headache research to \$100M annually with the increases phased in over 5 years. NHF will work to ensure that increased funding levels are sustained and that an NIH study section is established specifically for headache medicine to ensure fair grant review.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Seymour Diamond M.D." with a period at the end.

Seymour Diamond, M.D.
Executive Chairman