

Academy Staff Attend Act for NIH's BRAIN Initiative Panel
Wednesday, July 24, 2019 – Russell Senate Office Building

Academy staff enjoyed attending the Act for NIH's briefing and panel on the NIH BRAIN Initiative at the end of last month. [The Brain Research through Advancing Innovative Neuro-technologies \(BRAIN\) Initiative](#) is revolutionizing our understanding of the human brain. NIH-funded researchers have been working to create new tools which have allowed for the advancement in our understanding of how the brain encodes, stores, and retrieves information. These innovative studies and findings are just one example of how increased funding for NIH will continue to advance the health and well-being of Americans.

Both co-chairs of the NIH Caucus, Senators Dick Durbin (D-IL) and Lindsey Graham (R-SC), attended and offered remarks on the importance for increased funding of the NIH. Senator Durbin made it clear that he will continue to push for annual increases 5% above inflation. Senator Graham mentioned the importance of the impending budget agreement and how important those dollars are to research.

The esteemed panel of speakers featured multiple experts on the topic of neuro-degenerative disease including Walter Koroshetz, MD, Director of the National Institute of Neurological Disorders and Stroke (NINDS) at the NIH; Andrea Beckel-Mitchener, PhD, Director of the Office for Disparities Research and Workforce Diversity at the National Institute of Mental Health (NIMH) at the NIH; and Christopher Cowan, PhD, Chair of the Department of Neuroscience at the Medical College of South Carolina.

In addition to the panelists, Act for NIH also invited Brain Wallach, the founder of I AM ALS, who was diagnosed with the disease in November of 2017, to share his story. His remarks painted a picture of what it is like to go through this diagnosis and struggle of waiting for a cure. Brian's hope is that through the continued funding for the NIH and important initiatives like BRAIN, that finding a cure may someday be possible.



(L-R) Walter Koroshetz, MD, Director of the National Institute of Neurological Disorders and Stroke (NINDS) at the NIH, Andrea Beckel-Mitchener, PhD, Director of the Office for Disparities Research and Workforce Diversity at the National Institute of Mental Health (NIMH) at the NIH, Senator Dick Durbin (D-IL), Christopher Cowan, PhD, Chair of the Department of Neuroscience at the Medical College of South Carolina, Senator Lindsey Graham (R-SC), Brain Wallach, founder of I AM ALS, and (need her name)