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**The Future of Taxpayer- Funded Research:
Who Will Control Access to the Results?
*Business Group Endorses Greater Public Access***

WASHINGTON, D.C. February 9, 2012. How will scientific researchers and members of the public access government-funded research in the digital age? That is the question examined by a new report - *The Future of Taxpayer-Funded Research: Who Will Control Access to the Results?* - from the business-led Committee for Economic Development (CED).

According to Elliot Maxwell, the author of *The Future of Taxpayer-Funded Research*, “public policy that increases access to taxpayer-funded research allows greater use of today’s technologies to support more rapid scientific progress, more innovation, and higher economic growth.”

The U.S. National Institutes of Health (NIH) is the largest single funder of biomedical research in the world with a budget of \$31 billion. NIH research grants generate 90,000 articles each year. Since 2008, NIH’s public-access policy has required that its grantees place a copy of their peer-reviewed manuscripts accepted for publication by a scientific journal in PubMed Central (PMC), an online digital repository open to all, no later than 12 months after the version of record is published. Initially, NIH asked its grantees to deposit their work voluntarily; when only a small percentage of grantees did so, Congress directed that deposit be mandatory.

Mandatory deposit has resulted in a marked increase in public access to the results of NIH-funded research. PMC now includes 2.3 million full-text articles (not all on NIH-funded research). Close to 1,000 journals now deposit all of their articles, even if unrelated to NIH-funded research. Roughly 500,000 unique visitors access PMC on a typical workday.

Advocates of greater openness have supported the NIH public-access policy and proposals to extend such policies to research funded by other major federal funders of unclassified scientific, technical, and medical (STM) research. Opponents, primarily publishers of STM journals, have argued that the policy will damage their subscription-supported publishing businesses and, by so doing, undercut the peer-review system and threaten the quality of research available.

The Future of Taxpayer-Funded Research examines the costs and benefits of increased public access and proposals to either extend or overturn the NIH policy. It is focused on how greater openness affects the development and dissemination of research, the progress of science, the commercialization of research, and economic growth.

The report finds that:

- Increased public-access policies should be judged by their impact on the society and the development and dissemination of high-quality scientific research and not by their impact on publishers (either proprietary or open), digital repositories, or any particular means of disseminating knowledge, except as necessary to support high-quality research.
- The NIH public-access policy has substantially increased public access to research results with benefits that far outweigh the costs. Similar benefits can be expected from increasing access to research funded by other federal agencies.

- Increased public access accelerates progress in science by speeding up and broadening diffusion of knowledge not only to researchers in the field of a particular journal but also to others who have not had easy access to research.
- The processes for academic advancement—for example, tenure and promotion decisions—need to be rethought to reward researchers who disclose their findings or share new tools and processes early and openly.
- No persuasive evidence exists that greater public access, as provided by the NIH policy, has substantially harmed subscription-supported STM publishers over the last four years or threatens the sustainability of their journals or their ability to fund peer review. No evidence exists of a significant reduction in traditional publishing outlets or that there will be any shortage of outlets for high-quality research.
- The benefits of more access are so great that any delay in availability of research should be minimized. A maximum six month delay, now employed by other funders, has not been shown to have negative effects; those who seek delay should bear the burden of proof that the benefits outweigh the costs.
- The NIH policy focuses on manuscripts. But the manuscript is not the only measure nor is access to the article the only goal. Researchers should be able to access the manuscript's subparts—underlying data, protocols, tools utilized for analysis, etc.

“This excellent paper documents the key links between scientific progress and economic advancement. Greater public access to government-funded research accelerates scientific discovery and more efficiently transmits new breakthroughs to society as a whole. It truly gives taxpayers more bang for the buck,” said Charles Kolb, CED President. “I want to thank the Ewing Marion Kauffman Foundation for supporting this work.”

The Future of Taxpayer-Funded Research: Who Will Control Access to the Results? continues CED's work on basic research and follows work by the Digital Connections Council (DCC), a group of business leaders focused on digital economy issues, established by CED in 2003. For more on CED's work on innovation and technology, go to <http://www.ced.org/issues/innovation-technology>.

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Committee for Economic Development (CED) -- www.ced.org

CED is a non-profit, non-partisan organization of more than 200 business leaders and university presidents. Since 1942, its research and policy programs have addressed many of the nation's most pressing economic and social issues, including education reform, workforce competitiveness, campaign finance, health care, and global trade and finance. CED promotes policies to produce increased productivity and living standards, greater and more equal opportunity for every citizen, and an improved quality of life for all.