

# THE ECONOMIC CLUB

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O F W A S H I N G T O N, D. C.

**Excerpts from the Signature Event featuring Francis S. Collins,  
M.D., Ph.D., Director, National Institutes of Health**

**July 29, 2014**

“I love this amazingly paradoxical life, David. Every day, standing at the helm of this remarkable institution called NIH, I find out about something amazing that some scientist has done ... And then, in the same daily experience, is this frustration that we could be doing so much better. We should be going so much faster. We could have much sooner than we otherwise would a universal vaccine for influenza, so you wouldn’t have to take that yearly shot and we wouldn’t have to worry about pandemics in the future. We could have cancer that was more precisely diagnosed and treated sooner than we are getting right now. We could have answers to autism quicker than we currently have. Everything’s going about half the pace that it could.” ~ *The Honorable Francis S. Collins, M.D., Ph.D., Director, National Institutes of Health*

“A recent poll said roughly one in five young scientists has now seriously considered going to another country because other countries ... read the American playbook from 20 years ago. They saw what our investments in research did to our economy, to the vibrancy of the American experience, and they’re trying to replicate that. Look at China. China is increasing its support for biomedical R&D by 20 to 30 percent per year, even as we are going down ... Singapore, South Korea, Brazil, Europe, all of those going up in their support, because they see what it can do, while we are basically walking off the stage.” ~ *The Honorable Francis S. Collins, M.D., Ph.D., Director, National Institutes of Health*

“... in cancer, we’re seeing cancer survival rates improving each year, deaths dropping by 1 percent per year, year after year after year. ... each 1 percent decrease in cancer is estimated by economists to save our country \$500 billion.” ~ *The Honorable Francis S. Collins, M.D., Ph.D., Director, National Institutes of Health*

“... there is not one shred of evidence for a connection between vaccines and autism, and yet that continues to be perpetuated as a possible model, which causes many parents legitimately who have heard about this to wonder whether they should have their children vaccinated. By not doing so, [they] place [their children] at risk of all manner of terrible diseases that we thought were pretty much controlled.” ~ *The Honorable Francis S. Collins, M.D., Ph.D., Director, National Institutes of Health*

“... many economists would say that more than 50 percent of the American economic growth since World War II has been based on science and technology investments, and certainly in the 21st century the highest return – the most vigorous investments we’re making are in the biological, the life sciences.” ~ *The Honorable Francis S. Collins, M.D., Ph.D., Director, National Institutes of Health*