

Funding for the National Institutes of Health

Key Messages

Primary Message

Since its inception, the NIH has helped Americans live healthier, longer lives. Funding medical research today pays a lifetime of dividends in saving lives, better health outcomes, and improving the quality of life for all Americans. Today, it's more important than ever to ensure that this critical agency can continue to support both the health of Americans and regional and local economies. We urge policy makers to support strong funding growth for NIH so that discoveries can continue to lead to big breakthroughs and deliver future treatments and cures for patients.

Supporting Messages

NIH-funded medical research at medical schools, teaching hospitals, and other institutions nationwide drives breakthroughs that help Americans live longer, healthier lives—powering nearly every major advance in diagnosis, treatment, and prevention.

- Medical miracles are years and sometimes decades in the making. As a federal agency, the NIH is unique in its ability to take a long-term view on funding research.
 - Research into bacterial immune systems led to the discovery of the gene-editing technique CRISPR, which, among other applications, could make chemotherapy less toxic and cure blood disorders.
 - CRISPR therapies have been approved by the FDA as the first cell-based gene therapies for treatment of sickle cell disease in patients 12 and older.
- The long-term research that NIH supports improves patients' lives. For example:
 - NIH-supported research has led to major improvements in cancer detection, treatment, and prevention, saving 3.5 million lives over the past 20 years. Some examples of recent advances include the discovery of immunotherapy and gene therapy, breakthrough cancer treatments and even cures for some cancers, as well as reductions in chemotherapy toxicity.
 - Federally funded medical research through the NIH has led to a 70% reduction in death rates for heart disease and stroke and a 40% decline in infant mortality rates over the past 20 years.
 - NIH is currently supporting 68 active pharmacological clinical trials to treat Alzheimer's disease and related dementias.
 - NIH funded the clinical trials that demonstrated that three drugs can treat diabetic retinopathy, the leading cause of blindness in working-age adults. These drugs reversed vision loss and provided the first new therapies in 25 years.
- The science that NIH funds is the foundation that industry uses to develop new medical interventions. Because it is not always clear where fundamental research will lead, it often is considered too risky for companies to invest, so the federal government plays an important role in advancing such work.
 - NIH-funded research was the basis for virtually every one of the 356 new drugs approved by the FDA between 2010 to 2019.

- NIH is transparent about its use of taxpayer dollars and works to ensure that those dollars are invested as efficiently as possible.
 - NIH posts information about every study it funds in a free, online repository called RePORTER.
 - Patients and researchers alike access this tool to build on past NIH-supported research.
 - All NIH-funded trials are included on ClinicalTrials.gov. Any patient or researcher can go there to learn about or enroll in the latest, ongoing research.

Growing the NIH is a smart investment. NIH-funded research generates high-quality jobs and business development in every state across the country and enhances U.S. global competitiveness.

- The life-saving research that NIH supports spans across the country and is happening in your community.
 - More than 80% of the funding NIH receives is awarded to more than 300,000 researchers at over 2,500 universities and research institutions across the U.S.
 - AAMC-member medical schools and teaching hospitals conduct nearly 60% of all extramural research funded by the NIH.
- Economic Impact:
 - Over the years, not only has the strong bipartisan investment in NIH saved lives, it also has resulted in economic development.
 - In FY 2024, NIH-funded research supported more than 407,782 jobs across the US and generated more than \$94.5 billion in economic activity. Every \$1 in research funding generated \$2.56 in economic activity. (<https://www.unitedformedicalresearch.org/annual-economic-report/>)
 - For example, in 2024, NIH-supported research employed over 9,700 people in Tennessee, and generated almost \$2.2 billion in economic activity.
 - At the local level, research at medical schools and teaching hospitals contributed \$32.6 billion to communities and supported 348,000 jobs in a single year.
- Global Competitiveness:
 - The U.S. has long been the global leader in medical research, but other countries are catching up. Without steady and robust funding growth, China will soon outspend the U.S. on all research and development.
 - In 2000, the U.S. was responsible for 37.1% of worldwide R&D expenditures; by 2019, it decreased to 27.3% of research and development. China was only responsible for 4.5% of global R&D spending in 2000 and has now increased to 22%.

When Congress provides steady, robust funding growth for the NIH, it fuels the discovery of life-saving cures, strengthens the research workforce, and delivers lasting health benefits for all Americans.

- The NIH continues to tackle health concerns affecting American families nationwide. This includes everything from Alzheimer's, heart disease, and cancer, to rare, pediatric diseases and substance use disorder research.
 - **Alzheimer's Disease.** Today, more than 7 million Americans have Alzheimer's. This research is at a critical juncture with more than 495 clinical trials on Alzheimer's disease and related dementias.

- **Cancer.** Today, more than 15 different tumors can be treated by immunotherapy, but hundreds of others could be addressed with this approach. NIH funding is pursuing these possibilities.
- **Opioid Use Disorder.** The [NIH's Helping to End Addiction Long-term® Initiative \(HEAL\)](#) is an NIH-wide effort to speed scientific solutions to stem the national opioid public health crisis. The NIH HEAL Initiative uses an all-hands-on-deck approach, bringing together scientists, community members, the private sector, and multiple levels of government to end the opioid crisis. There have been over 1,800 research projects in all 50 states, with more than 200 funding announcements since 2018.
- **Rare Disease.** There are more than 6,000 known rare diseases and most develop in childhood. While individually most rare diseases might affect only a few hundred to a few thousand people worldwide, together they are common and affect about 25 million to 30 million in the US. NIH is funding research to help diagnose and treat these serious and life-threatening diseases.
- The NIH trains the next generation of researchers through grants and fellowships. This ensures a strong and committed workforce to discover the therapies and cures of the future.
- In recent years, NIH has only been able to fund roughly 1 of every 5 promising proposals that it has received. That means there is more research that could be conducted if more funds were made available. We must continue to expand NIH's capacity to support medical research to accelerate improvement in the nation's health.
 - Failing to support this funding endangers lives by halting current research and clinical trials and jeopardizing discoveries that lead to breakthroughs and the discovery of therapies and cures.
 - When we undermine our research institutions, we sacrifice the health and well-being of our nation.