

September 19, 2025

The Honorable Mike Johnson
Speaker
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Hakeem Jeffries
Minority Leader
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable John Thune
Majority Leader
U.S. Senate
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Chuck Schumer
Minority Leader
U.S. Senate
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Speaker Johnson, Leader Jeffries, Leader Thune, and Leader Schumer:

The undersigned organizations, including patient advocacy organizations, professional scientific and medical groups, and other aligned stakeholders, representing a broad range of medical and public health interests, write to you today to urge swift passage of a final appropriations bill that protects the National Institutes of Health (NIH) and provides at least \$48.7 billion in funding for NIH in fiscal year 2026 (FY 26), and to ensure that any appropriations bill or continuing resolution is free from harmful policy riders.

With longstanding support from bipartisan majorities, Congress has empowered NIH to advance research that has improved our nation's health and quality of life. Discoveries made with NIH support have led to myriad innovations that treat, cure, and prevent disease. Communities across America have benefited from the medical and economic benefits of NIH funding, from new approaches to identifying and treating cancer^[1], to support for small businesses and the generation of commercial biomedical innovations^[2]. However, we are alarmed by the administration's proposal to cut NIH funding by 40%, coupled with disruptions to NIH operations and release of grant funds in recent months, which have prevented scientific progress in areas of critical national interest, including chronic disease^[3] and preventing the spread of viruses with pandemic potential^[4].

Congress has the power to protect NIH from these devastating cuts and disruptions through the appropriations process by taking the following actions:

Providing adequate financial support: Medical research thrives when Congress provides steady, sustainable increases in funding. Adequate support for research that accounts for inflation is necessary to maintain progress on current priorities and provide confidence for the next generation of scientists who are still in their training period. Long-term continuing resolutions or shutdowns severely impact scientific progress and introduce uncertainty for research teams across the country. We urge Congress to prevent this disruption by

expeditiously passing a final bill that funds NIH to at least \$48.7 billion, consistent with the amount passed by the Senate Appropriations Committee, before September 30.

Legislating to the current NIH structure: The current structure of the 27 Institutes and Centers (ICs) at NIH has been developed over decades through input from Congress, scientists, patients, and other stakeholders. We appreciate that both the House and Senate Labor, Health and Human Services, Education, and Related Agencies Appropriations bills preserve the agency's current structure, and that the Senate's report reminds the administration that the Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions and Energy and Commerce Committees must receive 180-days' notice prior to making any structural changes to the agency.

While we welcome a thoughtful conversation about how NIH can improve processes and better meet the scientific demands of new public health challenges, a rapid consolidation through appropriations would create uncertainty about strategic prioritization. Without broad public input, a restructuring or consolidation could result in a failure to recognize certain necessary priorities, such as rare or orphan diseases. We ask Congress to ensure that input from the authorizing committees and stakeholders is considered before any changes are made to the NIH's current structure.

Avoiding arbitrary caps on research costs: We recognize the questions raised by Congress and the administration about appropriate use of taxpayer funds on Facilities and Administrative (F&A) cost rates applied to NIH grants. However, these costs are an instrumental part of ethical, reproducible, and transparent research, and should be supported appropriately by the federal government in partnership with research institutions. We urge Congress to avoid placing a direct cap on F&A rates through appropriations bills as this would jeopardize meritorious research that has higher costs related to e.g., ethical oversight or advanced instrumentation. Instead, we ask Congress to continue the ongoing dialogue with researchers and institutions aiming for a more transparent budget that gives taxpayers and Congress the information they need about the total cost of research.

Prevent forward-funding of all NIH grants: We are alarmed by the policy change to provide full forward-funding for all NIH grants immediately when awarded. This policy, which the administration began applying in FY 2025, is having immediate and disastrous near-term effects on paylines for investigator-initiated research funded by NIH, severely disadvantaging trainees and early career researchers who are seeking their first NIH grant. Moreover, the policy would create additional barriers to the appropriate oversight of ongoing grants, especially for sensitive research such as clinical trials. We urge Congress to prevent NIH from continuing this policy in FY 2026.

In conclusion, we appreciate the work that the House and Senate Appropriations Committees have done to date to advance bills that avoid cuts to NIH and demonstrate bipartisan support for research. The Congress now has the opportunity to help our nation's scientists make the next discoveries that will improve public health by passing a final appropriations bill that funds NIH adequately and protects this lifesaving agency from further disruption. Thank you for considering our request.

Sincerely,

Alliance for Aging Research
Alliance of Nurses for Healthy Environments
American Academy of Allergy, Asthma & Immunology
American Association for Dental, Oral, and Craniofacial Research
American Association for the Study of Liver Diseases
American Association of Veterinary Medical Colleges
American Brain Coalition
American Foundation for Suicide Prevention
American Gastroenterological Association
American Geophysical Union
American Industrial Hygiene Association
American Kidney Fund
American Lung Association
American Medical Informatics Association (AMIA)
American Physiological Society
American Society for Pharmacology and Experimental Therapeutics (ASPET)
American Society for Reproductive Medicine
American Society of Hematology
American Society of Pediatric Nephrology
American Thoracic Society
American Urogynecologic Society
Association of Academic Physiatrists
Association of Independent Research Institutes
Association of Population Centers
Association of Schools and Colleges of Optometry
AVAC
Center for Endometriosis Care
Coalition of Skin Diseases
Cold Spring Harbor Laboratory
Endocrine Society
Endometriosis Association
Entomological Society of America

Foundation for Sarcoidosis Research
Friedreich's Ataxia Research Alliance (FARA)
Gerontological Society of America
Great Lakes Center for Reproductive and Children's Environmental Health
Health Care Without Harm
HealthyWomen
HIV Medicine Association
Institute for Protein Innovation
Kids for Saving Earth
Massachusetts Coalition for Occupational Safety and Health Inc.
Maternal Mental Health Leadership Alliance
MDI Biological Laboratory
Monell Chemical Senses Center
National Alliance for Eye and Vision Research
National Kidney Foundation
Necrotizing Enterocolitis (NEC) Society
NephCure
Northern California Institute for Research and Education, Inc., NCIRE
Pancreatic Cancer Action Network (PanCAN)
Parkinson's Foundation
Population Association of America
RTI International
Society for Maternal-Fetal Medicine
Society for Neuroscience
Society for Pediatric and Perinatal Epidemiologic Research
Society for Public Health Education
Society for Research in Child Development (SRCD)
Society for Women's Health Research
Society of Behavioral Medicine
Society of Experimental Psychologists
Society of General Internal Medicine
Society of Toxicology
The Association for Research in Vision and Ophthalmology (ARVO)
The College on Problems of Drug Dependence
The Foundation for Peripheral Neuropathy
The Michael J. Fox Foundation for Parkinson's Research
The Myositis Association
The National Association of Nurse Practitioners in Women's Health (NPWH)
The National Pancreas Foundation
Treatment Action Group

VHL Alliance
Vision Sciences Society
WE ACT for Environmental Justice
Women's Health Advocates

[1] Berk-Krauss, J., et al., "New Systematic Therapies and Trends in Cutaneous Melanoma Deaths Among US Whites, 1986-2016" Am J Public Health. 2020 May;110(5):731-733. doi: 10.2105/AJPH.2020.305567. Epub 2020 Mar 19.

[2] Azoulay, P., et al., "Public R&D Investments and Private-sector Patenting: Evidence from NIH Funding Rules" Rev Econ Stud. 2019 Jan;86(1):117-152. doi: 10.1093/restud/rdy034. Epub 2018 Jun 15.

[3] <https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2025/06/04/health/trump-cuts-nih-grants-research.html>

[4] <https://www.science.org/content/article/nih-terminates-network-aimed-stopping-pandemics-they-start>