

# Congress of the United States

Washington, DC 20510

September 3, 2025

The Honorable Jay Bhattacharya  
Director, National Institutes of Health  
9000 Rockville Pike  
Bethesda, Maryland 20892

Dear Dr. Bhattacharya,

We write with serious concerns regarding reports that the National Institutes of Health (NIH) has delayed its distribution of critical grants that advance science and expand patients' access to care. The threat of impoundment, a president intentionally delaying or withholding funds appropriated by Congress, was rarely a concern until now.<sup>1</sup> This Administration has reportedly delayed as much as \$4.7 billion<sup>2</sup> in obligated NIH grant funds to date, which has a direct and immediate impact on the entire medical research enterprise – from research institutions and physician researchers to patients and their families. With the concentration of research institutions in Massachusetts, the situation is particularly dire for our communities and businesses – and for patients, it is a matter of life-and-death.

The true shortfall in NIH funding due to terminated and frozen grants is estimated to be billions of dollars.<sup>3</sup> Massachusetts alone has already lost nearly \$1.3 billion in medical research funding under this Administration.<sup>4</sup> To put it into context, UMass Chan Medical School has 35 grants that have received fundable scores and have completed the advisory council review process. These congressionally-appropriated funds would have been released by now in prior Administrations. Another major Massachusetts-based research institution, Harvard University, currently has three grants being withheld (defined as those that are not receiving payments despite receiving a Notice of Award), amounting to over \$1.3 million in withheld funds.<sup>5</sup> While withholding and terminating funds has had significant and severe impacts on these institutions, the most devastating impact has been on the patients who are losing access to innovative

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<sup>1</sup> Begley, Sharon, Megan Molteni, Nick Stoico, and Mike Damiano. 2025. "Inside Trump's NIH: political control, stalled grants, and 'code 19' | STAT." STAT News. <https://www.statnews.com/2025/08/15/inside-trump-nih-stalled-grants-political-control-threatened-research/>.

<sup>2</sup> Wu, Katherine J. 2025. "The NIH Has Two Months Left to Spend Billions." The Atlantic. <https://www.theatlantic.com/health/archive/2025/08/nih-funding-whiplash/683773/>.

<sup>3</sup> Association of American Medical Colleges | AAMC. 2025. "Clinical trials and research training stalled as billions in NIH funds sit idle." AAMC. <https://www.aamc.org/about-us/mission-areas/medical-research/publication/clinical-trials-and-research-training-stalled-billions-nih-funds-sit-idle>.

<sup>4</sup> Ross, Noam, Scott Delaney, Anthony Barente, Emma Mairson,, Eric Scott, and Mally Shan. 2025. "Grant Witness | NIH Data." Grant Witness. <https://grant-witness.us/nih-data.html>.

<sup>5</sup> Ibid.

treatments and therapies unavailable outside of clinical trial settings as a result of these actions. Patients are dying because their care teams now have considerable doubt and confusion as to what trials are open and available, for how long, and whether or not they are funded.

Accordingly, we demand that the Trump Administration discontinue this dangerous practice and immediately release congressionally obligated funds for medical research. As you know, the NIH is the single largest public funder of biomedical research in the world. In fiscal year (FY) 2023 alone, NIH funding generated an estimated \$92.89 billion in economic activity (every \$1 generated about \$2.46).<sup>6</sup> In FY 2024, Massachusetts received nearly \$3.5 billion in NIH funding, supporting over 30,000 jobs and generating nearly \$7.7 billion in economic activity.<sup>7</sup> Failing to distribute allocated funds will have lasting, catastrophic impacts on local and global economies. We cannot allow this Administration to continue to undermine U.S. global leadership in medical and scientific innovation and endanger patients' lives.

Through annual discretionary and mandatory appropriations, Congress allocates funding to NIH each year. According to the NIH's own webpage, almost all of these funding streams (93 percent) go directly to research institutions (e.g., medical schools, universities, etc.) and NIH's own laboratories.<sup>8</sup> Between fiscal years (FY) 2016 and FY 2024, the NIH distributed an average of \$16.3 billion each year by June. In FY 2025, the NIH has only distributed \$11.6 billion during the same timeframe, meaning about 12,000 fewer grants and 30 percent less in funding than prior years.<sup>9</sup> NIH must expedite its efforts to ensure that it obligates its full appropriation before the end of FY 2025. By not distributing the funds already allocated to NIH through the FY 2025 budget process,<sup>10</sup> the NIH betrays its mission and endangers the lives of millions of patients in need of new treatments and cures.

These funding cuts and delays discourage research, which has led to the ongoing "brain drain"<sup>11</sup> and endangered the United States' global leadership in medical research and innovation.<sup>12</sup> Even before President Trump assumed office, China was already scoring wins over the U.S. in

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6 NIH. 2025. "Direct Economic Contributions." National Institutes of Health (NIH). <https://www.nih.gov/about-nih/impact-nih-research/serving-society/direct-economic-contributions>.

7 United for Medical Research (UMR). 2024. "NIH in Your State | Massachusetts." United for Medical Research. <https://www.unitedformedicalresearch.org/nih-in-your-state/massachusetts/>.

8 NIH. 2025. "Budget." National Institutes of Health (NIH). <https://www.nih.gov/about-nih/organization/budget>.

9 Molteni, Megan, and J. Emory Parker. 2025. "NIH research funding gap grew, though grant reviews resumed | STAT." Stat News. <https://www.statnews.com/2025/06/27/despite-resumption-of-nih-grant-reviews-research-funding-gap-grew/>.

10 Wu, Katherine J. 2025. "The NIH Has Two Months Left to Spend Billions." The Atlantic. <https://www.theatlantic.com/health/archive/2025/08/nih-funding-whiplash/683773/>.

11 Boyle, Patrick. 2025. "Former NIH chief calls research cuts 'careless' and 'heartless.'" Association of American Medical Colleges. <https://www.aamc.org/news/former-nih-chief-calls-research-cuts-careless-and-heartless>.

12 Global Biodefense Staff. 2025. "NIH Budget Cuts Threaten to Cripple U.S. Biomedical Innovation and Public Health." Global Biodefense. <https://globalbiodefense.com/2025/07/28/nih-budget-cuts-public-health-biomedical-research-crisis/>.

recruiting scientific talent, “drawing some of the world’s best researchers to its campuses, people decorated with Nobel Prizes and MacArthur ‘Genius’ grants.”<sup>13</sup> With the Trump Administration’s slashing of NIH grants and attack on research institutions and international students, China (as well as other countries such as Canada<sup>14</sup> and France<sup>15</sup>) quickly capitalized – offering streamlined admissions to U.S. graduates, running advertisements to welcome “talents who have been dismissed by the U.S. NIH,”<sup>16</sup> and offering perks, including home-purchase subsidies and signing bonuses up to \$700,000.<sup>17</sup> China has already begun overtaking the U.S. as the global leader in several areas of medical research.<sup>18 19</sup> The termination and withholding of NIH grants only accelerates the leads other countries are rapidly gaining on the United States. The Trump Administration’s decisions are dangerous and short-sighted.

Without reliable federal investments for high-risk medical research, you and the Trump Administration risk undoing decades of advancements in science and diminishing U.S. global leadership in medical innovation. We demand that NIH immediately release obligated grant funding and continue the irreplaceable investment to save lives. Thank you for your attention to this critical matter.

Sincerely,



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Jake Auchincloss  
Member of Congress



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Lori Trahan  
Member of Congress

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<sup>13</sup> Wang, Vivian. 2025. “China Really Wants to Attract Talented Scientists. Trump Just Helped.” The New York Times. <https://www.nytimes.com/2025/06/04/world/asia/trump-science-visa-china.html>.

<sup>14</sup> Wilson, Jim. 2025. “Province ‘rolls out welcome mat’ for U.S. scientists, healthcare professionals.” Canadian HR Reporter. <https://www.hrreporter.com/focus-areas/recruitment-and-staffing/province-rolls-out-welcome-mat-for-us-scientists-healthcare-professionals/392054>.

<sup>15</sup> Joseph, Andrew. 2024. “Europe, with ambitions to poach American scientists, faces pressures of its own.” STAT+ News. <https://www.statnews.com/2025/06/30/france-woos-american-researchers-worried-over-trump-nih-cuts/>.

<sup>16</sup> Top Biomedical Science (@imedverse). 2025. “Offer from China.” X/Twitter, February 18, 2025, 11:00am ET. <https://x.com/imedverse/status/1891880532251914430>.

<sup>17</sup> Zhu, Julie, Fanny Potkin, Eduardo Baptista, and Michael Martina. 2023. “Insight: China quietly recruits overseas chip talent as US tightens curbs.” Reuters. <https://www.reuters.com/technology/china-quietly-recruits-overseas-chip-talent-us-tightens-curbs-2023-08-24/>.

<sup>18</sup> MedPath, Inc. 2025. “China Overtakes US as Global Leader in Clinical Trial Volume, GlobalData Analysis Reveals.” MedPath. <https://trial.medpath.com/news/997b91cdf184ee0e/china-overtakes-us-as-global-leader-in-clinical-trial-volume-globaldata-analysis-reveals>.

<sup>19</sup> Nature Index. 2025. “Nature | China overtakes the United States in cancer research output.” Nature Portfolio. <https://www.nature.com/articles/d41586-025-01154-4>.



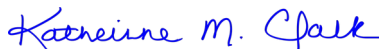
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James P. McGovern  
Member of Congress



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Richard E. Neal  
Member of Congress



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Katherine M. Clark  
Member of Congress



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Seth Moulton  
Member of Congress



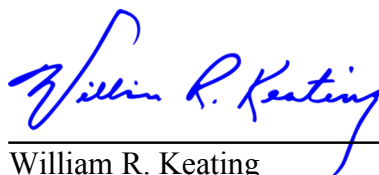
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Ayanna Pressley  
Member of Congress



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Stephen F. Lynch  
Member of Congress



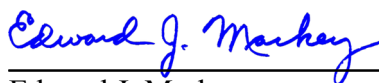
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William R. Keating  
Member of Congress



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Elizabeth Warren  
United States Senator



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Edward J. Markey  
United States Senator