Director's Letter

On behalf of the National Institutes of Health (NIH), I am transmitting NIH's Congressional Justification for the fiscal year (FY) 2027 budget. This request for $41.5 billion will support NIH's mission to advance biomedical and behavioral research and translate scientific discoveries into better health for all.

Since beginning my tenure as the 18th NIH Director, it has been clear that NIH's impact is driven by the extraordinary dedication and expertise of its staff and the investigators it supports. Across the agency, staff bring deep scientific knowledge, a strong commitment to public service, and operational excellence to every aspect of the research enterprise—from setting priorities and stewarding public resources to ensuring rigor, safety, and transparency. This depth of talent, combined with sustained federal investment, enables NIH to support world-class research, respond to emerging health needs, and deliver discoveries that improve lives across the Nation.

Building on the priorities established in my first year as NIH Director, FY 2027 represents a shift from setting direction to executing with focus and accountability. Over the past year, NIH has worked to strengthen the rigor, transparency, and stewardship that underpin public trust in biomedical research, while sharpening our focus on improving population health and addressing the Nation's chronic disease burden. We will build on this foundation by accelerating translation, broadening research portfolios to drive innovation, and ensuring that NIH's investments deliver measurable benefits for patients, families, and communities across the country.

NIH Priorities

My top priorities for FY 2027 are to:

1. **Improve Population Health:** Further align NIH-supported research across basic, translational, and clinical domains to reduce the burden of chronic and infectious disease, improve prevention and early intervention, and deliver effective treatments across the lifespan.
2. **Build Reliable and Actionable Science:** Strengthen rigor, reproducibility, transparency, and access to research so that all high-quality research, regardless of outcome, contributes to cumulative knowledge, informs decision-making, and accelerates translation.
3. **Broaden Research Portfolios to Drive Innovation:** Steward balanced research portfolios that support foundational discovery, early-stage and high-risk ideas, and translational research, creating space for new approaches while sustaining areas of proven impact.
4. **Accelerate Discovery with Next-Generation Tools:** Leverage data, artificial intelligence, and human-based research models to speed discovery and improve relevance to human health.
5. **Ensure Safety, Transparency, and Accountability:** Protect research participants and data, strengthen oversight and compliance, and ensure responsible stewardship of public resources to maintain the confidence and trust of the American people.

Advancing Population Health Through Integrated Science

Improving population health requires coordinated investment across the research continuum. NIH supports research that spans prevention, diagnosis, treatment, and long-term management of disease, while ensuring that discoveries are applicable to real-world settings and accessible to all populations.

Chronic diseases remain the leading causes of death and disability in the United States, underscoring the importance of prevention-focused and translational research. NIH continues to advance precision prevention strategies through efforts such as the Nutrition for Precision Health study, powered by the *All of Us* Research Program. This research examines how genetics, lifestyle, the gut microbiome, and other factors influence individual responses to diet, with the goal of informing more effective strategies to prevent chronic disease.

Autoimmune diseases affect an estimated 24 million Americans, often requiring lifelong care and significantly limiting quality of life. NIH-supported research is advancing understanding of immune dysregulation and accelerating development of more effective treatments for conditions such as multiple sclerosis and lupus, which disproportionately affect women and individuals in their prime working years.

Neurodegenerative diseases represent another major public health challenge. NIH leads federal research on Alzheimer's disease and Alzheimer's disease-related dementias, Parkinson's disease, and amyotrophic lateral sclerosis (ALS). These conditions affect millions of Americans and place significant emotional and financial strain on families and caregivers. NIH-supported research has advanced biomarker discovery, improved early detection, and identified new therapeutic targets to slow or prevent disease progression.

NIH continues to support research to better understand autism spectrum disorders and associated conditions. Through integrated basic, clinical, and epidemiological approaches, NIH is working to identify risk factors, improve diagnosis, and inform interventions that can improve outcomes for children and families.

Building Reliable Science and Translating Discovery

To ensure that research leads to meaningful health impact, NIH is advancing the "science of science" by emphasizing rigor, reproducibility, and transparency. NIH values well-designed studies and accessible results regardless of outcome, recognizing that learning from positive, negative, and null findings accelerates progress and reduces research waste.

Recent NIH-supported advances—from gene-editing approaches for rare pediatric diseases to innovative brain-computer interfaces restoring communication and sensation—demonstrate how rigorous science can rapidly improve lives. NIH is also expanding access to real-world data networks, enabling researchers to study treatment effectiveness across populations, monitor safety after approval, understand disease progression, and inform prevention and care strategies that reflect real-world health needs.

Fostering Innovation and Expanding Access to Research

NIH fosters innovation by supporting a diverse and balanced research portfolio. Through a unified funding strategy, NIH is strengthening its ability to curate portfolios that encompass the full spectrum of scientific approaches within each research area with the goal of supporting foundational discovery, translational research, and early-stage innovative ideas.

Programs such as the High-Risk, High-Reward (HRHR) Research Program, supported through the NIH Common Fund, enable investigators to pursue bold ideas that may be too novel for traditional funding mechanisms.

The Institutional Development Award (IDeA) Program strengthens research capacity in states and territories that have historically received lower levels of NIH funding, many of which include rural and underserved communities. Specifically, IDeA supports infrastructure, workforce development, and clinical research networks in these communities.

Additionally, through initiatives such as NIH CARE for Health™, NIH is working to integrate research into primary care settings and expand participation in clinical studies, particularly in areas with limited research infrastructure and access to care. These efforts improve the relevance of research findings and help expand access to care and research opportunities.

Looking Ahead

As we look ahead to FY 2027, NIH is focused on advancing research that is rigorous, cutting-edge, and directly responsive to the most pressing health challenges facing the American people. Millions of children and adults continue to experience poor outcomes from chronic conditions such as obesity, heart disease, cancer, and related disorders. To Make America Healthy Again, we must build on NIH's strong track record of addressing complex scientific challenges and recommit to confronting the chronic disease crisis affecting families and communities nationwide. While NIH will continue to lead in basic research, we will also emphasize research with the potential to translate more directly and rapidly to the patients who need it.

Equally important, NIH must maintain the confidence and trust of the American people. Scientific discoveries can only improve health if the public has confidence in the rigor, transparency, and integrity of the research that underpins them. Strengthening that trust is essential to ensuring NIH continues to serve the public interest effectively.

NIH will continue to sustain the Nation's investment in biomedical research and to advance science that improves health, reduces disease burden, and delivers real benefits for the American people.

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