

The National Biomedical Research Act

Senator Elizabeth Warren (D-MA) and Congresswoman Yvette Clarke (D-NY)

Background

Research conducted and supported by the National Institutes of Health (NIH) and the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) is critical to the next generation of biomedical innovation. The NIH and the FDA need predictable, robust funding to advance the research, development, and review of tomorrow's new discoveries and medical breakthroughs. However, NIH funding in the past decade has been inconsistent. As a result of congressional budget cuts and the rising cost of biomedical research, NIH funding (adjusted for inflation in the biomedical research sector) decreased by about 12% from FY2010-FY2013.¹ Though Congress has increased NIH funding in recent years², the Trump Administration has repeatedly proposed cutting the NIH budget.³

Legislation

Senator Warren and Congresswoman Clarke are reintroducing the **National Biomedical Research Act** to provide the NIH and FDA with supplemental funding for biomedical research. The legislation would create the Biomedical Innovation Fund, a new funding stream of **\$10 billion per year** for select initiatives at the NIH and the FDA. The legislation makes clear that the Biomedical Innovation Fund should supplement, not supplant, existing appropriations for the agencies. Funds would only be available during years when Congress increases discretionary appropriations for NIH and FDA, thus ensuring that funding for medical research never falls below Fiscal Year 2020 levels. Fund dollars will also be available through interagency transfer to support research conducted jointly by the NIH or the FDA and other federal agencies.

The Biomedical Research Fund would supplement yearly appropriations for:

- **Basic Research:** research on the underlying basis of disease to better address disease prevention, diagnosis, and treatment;
- **Disruptive Innovation:** breakthrough research on diseases with unmet medical needs or for which current treatments are limited, inadequate, or burdensome;
- **Addressing Burdensome Diseases:** research on chronic, degenerative diseases that disproportionately contribute to spending under Medicare, Medicaid, Children's Health Insurance Program, TRICARE, or the Veterans Health Administration;
- **Early Career Scientists:** grants to young scientists and research institutions supporting these scientists, which lead to earlier research independence and enhance employment opportunities in America;
- **Improving Diversity:** research conducted by investigators from traditionally underrepresented groups, research in labs of varying sizes, and research at institutions in states that could improve the geographic diversity of funding;
- **Regulatory Science:** research to improve the predictability, consistency, and efficiency of the review of medical products and regulatory decision-making; and
- **Medical Product Surveillance:** the development, regulatory review, and postmarket surveillance of new medical products.

Endorsements

AIDS Action Committee, AIDS Institute, American Association of Colleges of Nursing, American Heart Association, American Liver Foundation, American Society of Clinical Oncology, American Society of Gene & Cell Therapy, Commissioned Officers Association of the U.S. Public Health Service, Conference of Boston Teaching Hospitals, Dana-Farber Cancer Institute, Fenway Health, Hemophilia Federation of America, Infectious Diseases Society of America, Mended Hearts, National Alopecia Areata Foundation, Neurofibromatosis Northeast, Massachusetts Down Syndrome Congress, National Brain Tumor Society, National Down Syndrome Society, Public Citizen, Society of Behavioral Medicine, United Mitochondrial Disease Foundation, University of Massachusetts Medical School, and ZERO Cancer.

¹ Center for American Progress, “Erosion of Funding for the National Institutes of Health Threatens U.S. Leadership in Biomedical Research,” March 25, 2014, <https://www.americanprogress.org/issues/economy/reports/2014/03/25/86369/erosion-of-funding-for-the-national-institutes-of-health-threatens-u-s-leadership-in-biomedical-research/>.

² Congressional Research Service, “National Institutes of Health (NIH) Funding: FY1994-FY2020,” April 4, 2019, <https://fas.org/sgp/crs/misc/R43341.pdf>.

³ Nature, “Trump seeks big cuts to science funding—again,” Heidi Ledford, Sara Reardon, Emiliano Rodríguez Mega, Jeff Tollefson, and Alexandra Witze, March 11, 2019, <https://www.nature.com/articles/d41586-019-00719-4>.