

Congress of the United States

Washington, DC 20515

February 20, 2025

The Honorable Robert Kennedy, Jr.
Secretary
Department of Health and Human Services
200 Independence Avenue SW
Washington, DC 20201

Matthew J. Memoli, M.D., M.S.
Acting Director
National Institutes of Health
9000 Rockville Pike
Bethesda, Maryland 20892

Dear Secretary Kennedy and Acting Director Memoli,

We write to share our profound concerns with the abrupt, sweeping and deeply damaging cuts to research in Maryland and across the country that will occur because of the *Supplemental Guidance to the 2024 NIH Grants Policy Statement: Indirect Cost Rates* (Guidance), recently issued without warning by the National Institutes of Health (NIH). We ask that you immediately rescind this irresponsible Guidance.

On February 7, the NIH unveiled its Guidance to illegally cap indirect cost rates that research institutions in Maryland rely on to sustain their groundbreaking, life-saving research and patient clinical trials. Institutions and the federal government regularly negotiate indirect costs with extensive documentation. These agreements represent the NIH's fair share of the use of institution's facilities and physical lab operations, equipment, security, data processing and storage and research support services.

Barring judicial intervention, this massive cut to NIH reimbursements for research at Maryland institutions would have taken immediate effect last week. The legally dubious and truly "arbitrary and capricious" action by the NIH spurred a number of lawsuits, including one that the state of Maryland joined.¹ A federal judge issued a temporary restraining order² enjoining the NIH from implementing the Guidance nationwide pending further judicial review. While this temporary relief was welcome news for Maryland and its research institutions, the Guidance has plunged institutions and researchers – and the patients they serve – in Maryland and across the country into a state of devastating uncertainty.

The insinuation in the Guidance that institutions across the country will be able to replace the millions of lost research dollars with funding from private foundations is out of touch with reality. Maryland's research institutions are economic generators, supporting thousands of jobs and generating over \$5.7 billion in economic activity in the state. In Fiscal Year 2023, the NIH awarded \$2.74 billion in grants and contracts to Maryland researchers, directly supporting over twenty-three thousand jobs, and over three thousand biopharmaceutical industry businesses. This

¹ <https://www.marylandattorneygeneral.gov/press/2025/021025.pdf>

² <https://www.mass.gov/doc/nih-tro/download>

economic generation is not unique to just Maryland – according to the NIH, in fiscal year 2023, every dollar of NIH funding generated approximately \$2.46 in economic activity. Thousands of Maryland jobs are now at risk and thrown into uncertainty as a result of these pending NIH cuts.

Maryland higher education institutions lead the country in advanced and pioneering research. Johns Hopkins University (JHU) is considered the nation’s first research university and has revolutionized higher education, science and medicine over 145 years. Its groundbreaking research contributed to the development of cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR), the pacemaker, and the first effective treatment for sickle cell anemia. JHU supports over 600 current and ongoing clinical trials on cancer, pediatrics and children's health, heart and vascular studies, and the aging brain. At risk with these cuts are studies to help combat suicide and overdose, research on chronic illnesses and hearing loss for seniors, and clinical trials to better understand and treat prostate cancer. As one JHU researcher put it, “reducing the support that keeps our research operational is not just a fiscal decision – it’s a threat to human lives.”³

The University System of Maryland (USM) has a robust research enterprise that drives innovation and contributes greatly to the state’s economy – which will be greatly undermined by these arbitrary NIH cuts. The University of Maryland, College Park (UMCP) is recognized as one of the top public universities in the country and is a national leader in the development of therapeutics and biomedical devices, neuroscience, and the application of advanced computing to major health challenges, among other areas. NIH funding has been critical to supporting not only major research centers on UMCP’s campus but their graduate students and early career scientists. The University of Maryland Baltimore (UMB) is home to a leading Comprehensive Cancer Center – combining academic study with cutting-edge biomedical research and patient care. UMB leads the way in neuroscience, microbiology, immunology, and vaccinology research utilizing NIH funding. It also directs millions of NIH dollars toward research on traumatic brain and spinal cord injuries, sepsis, and dementia. These Maryland institutions are world class leaders with long and storied histories of breakthroughs and accomplishments – possible only through partnership with the NIH.

Other Maryland higher education institutions within and outside the USM system also receive NIH funding – including Morgan State University, Mount St. Mary’s University, Notre Dame of Maryland University, Towson University, the University of Maryland Baltimore County, and the University of Maryland Eastern Shore. Dozens of other Maryland companies and professional societies also receive critical NIH research funding. These ill-conceived cuts to NIH funding will leave a significant wake of destruction across the state.

Simply put, the federal funding Maryland institutions have received through NIH is not waste. It funds new breakthroughs discovered by Maryland scientists, doctors, and researchers at world-class institutions. It funds new life-saving cures for Maryland patients – from our newborns to our seniors, from children battling rare cancers to our servicemembers injured in battle. It funds thousands of Maryland jobs. And to arbitrarily and illegally cut it threatens Maryland’s health,

³ <https://hub.jhu.edu/2025/02/17/nih-funding-suicide-prevention/>

safety, and economy. Slashing research funding will ultimately harm patients and even cost lives – many of them Marylanders.

Maryland institutions have a mission to “improve the human condition and serve the public good of Maryland and society at large through education, research, clinical care, and service.”⁴ That very mission is threatened by this ill-conceived and deeply damaging cut to NIH research funding. This Guidance represents yet one more attack by the Administration on higher education institutions, science, and the critical workforce that makes scientific and medical research possible.

We write to urge the NIH to consider the scale of destruction posed by massive reductions to research funding in Maryland, and across the country, and immediately rescind the Guidance from February 7. We urge you to allow the lifesaving work of the NIH and its partner research institutions to continue without further interruption.

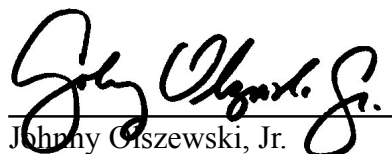
Sincerely,



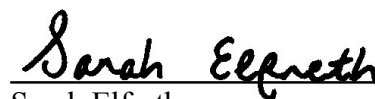
Angela Alsobrooks
United States Senator



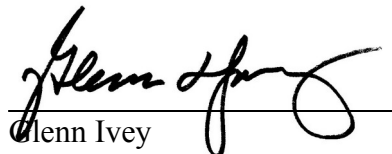
Chris Van Hollen
United States Senator



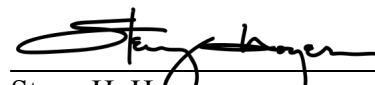
Johnny Ciszewski, Jr.
Member of Congress



Sarah Elfreth
Member of Congress

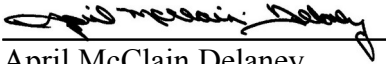


Glenn Ivey
Member of Congress

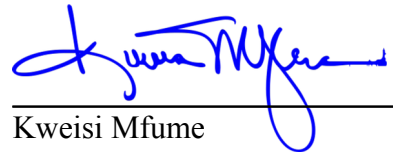


Steny H. Hoyer
Member of Congress

⁴ Commonwealth of Massachusetts, et. Al, v. National Institutes of Health et al., Declaration of Dr. Bruce E. Jarrell



April McClain Delaney
Member of Congress



Kweisi Mfume
Member of Congress



Jamie Raskin
Member of Congress