



## Written Statement for the Record

Senate Appropriations Committee Hearing:

*"Biomedical Research: Keeping America's Edge in Innovation"*

April 30<sup>th</sup>, 2025

Dear Chair Collins, Ranking Member Murray, and distinguished Members of the Committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to submit this statement for the record on the critical importance of sustained and robust investments in biomedical research. On behalf of advocates, researchers, and communities who depend on these life-saving efforts, I urge Congress to reaffirm its commitment to sustaining and strengthening robust funding for the National Institutes of Health (NIH).

The United States' leadership in biomedical research has saved lives, transformed public health, fueled economic growth, and cemented America's reputation as a global innovator. Investments in NIH have enabled breakthroughs against cancer, Alzheimer's, HIV, tuberculosis (TB), emerging infectious diseases and chronic diseases — making America and the world healthier, safer, and more prosperous.

It is also important to note that the agency is the "National Institutes of Health", and not the "Institutes of National Health" – reinforcing the long-standing tradition of research excellence in protecting and preserving health in the US and around the world. For over a century, scientists at the NIH and those supported by it, have paved the way for life-saving and life-extending discoveries. In that time, hundreds of scientists who won the Nobel Prize conducted their work at NIH and/or were supported by NIH. Their studies have mapped the human genome and led to the development of MRI, understanding of how viruses can cause cancer, insights into cholesterol control, knowledge of how our brain processes visual information, and the development of antiretrovirals for HIV treatment and prevention, among dozens of other advances.

One of the most recent and exciting advances is the use of injectable lenacapavir to prevent HIV infection. The journal *Science* named it the "breakthrough of the year" for 2024 and the FDA is poised to approve it in June. While Gilead Sciences – a leading US bio-pharmaceutical company – developed the drug (and manufactures it in the US), the underlying technology was developed with NIH-funded research at the University of Utah, more than two decades ago. This work in basic science that leads to transformative technology is testament to the critical role of NIH investments in basic science in forming the foundation of discoveries that save lives.

The Federal AIDS Policy Partnership (FAPP) Research Working Group, co-chaired by AVAC and the Treatment Action Group (TAG), represents a coalition of over 70 national and local HIV/AIDS research advocates, scientists, clinicians, and community leaders from across the United States. Together, we



work to advance and protect a robust HIV research agenda that is critical to ending the HIV epidemic. AVAC, a global advocacy organization, leads efforts to accelerate ethical research, mobilize partnerships, and ensure that innovations reach the communities most affected. We bring the voices of researchers, people living with and at risk for HIV, and public health leaders into conversations about U.S. biomedical research priorities.

### **NIH Funding Fuels Innovation and Economic Growth**

NIH funding is not just an investment in health; it is a powerful economic driver. Every \$1 of NIH funding generates \$2.46 in state economic activity, supporting over 300,000 researchers at more than 2,500 institutions across the nation. Between 2007 and 2022, at least 86% of U.S. government funding for global health research and development (R&D) was reinvested in American companies and institutions, creating an estimated 600,000 new American jobs and \$104 billion in direct economic activity.

Moreover, NIH-supported research has played a role in the development of nearly every FDA-approved drug over the past decade. Public investment in research stimulates private sector innovation, with every \$1 spent yielding \$8.38 in industry investment, culminating in \$255 billion in long-term economic benefits.

### **Cuts to NIH Will Make America Sicker and Weaker**

Recent large-scale layoffs and funding cuts at NIH pose a grave threat to America's health, economy, and global leadership. Shrinking the research pipeline will slow the discovery of new treatments, hinder responses to future health threats, and cede leadership to other nations.

The impact of these cuts will reverberate widely:

- Universities and research centers will lose the ability to attract top-tier talent.
- Local economies anchored by biomedical research will suffer job losses and decreased economic activity.
- Promising advances, such as shorter, highly effective treatments for drug-resistant TB and potential HIV vaccines, risk stalling.
- Health disparities will widen, particularly among key populations disproportionately impacted by HIV and TB, such as LGBTQ+ communities, people who use drugs, and communities of color.

### **Impact on HIV and TB Research**

The consequences for HIV and TB research are particularly devastating. As of March 31, 2025, at least 145 NIH grants dedicated to HIV research have been terminated, jeopardizing \$450 million in funding. These cuts disrupt clinical trials, derail scientific advances, and threaten to reverse decades of progress against two of the world's deadliest infectious diseases.



NIH-funded South African research sites have been instrumental in pioneering advances in HIV and TB prevention and treatment, including the recent studies of injectable lenacapavir for HIV prevention — achievements that benefit the U.S. and global health security. Shuttering these programs endangers millions of lives and undermines critical international partnerships.

### **Investing in NIH Is Investing in America's Future**

The benefits of NIH investment extend far beyond laboratories. Biomedical research strengthens national security, builds pandemic preparedness, drives innovation, and ensures a healthier, more resilient America. Cutting NIH funding not only endangers current health initiatives but will weaken our ability to address future health crises and develop scientific innovations.

We cannot afford to relinquish America's edge in biomedical leadership. We respectfully urge Congress to:

- Reject funding cuts to NIH and support robust, sustained investments in biomedical research.
- Recognize biomedical research as a national priority essential to America's health, security, and economic strength.
- Protect and expand funding for HIV and TB research, ensuring continued progress against these epidemics.

Thank you for your leadership and continued support for America's research enterprise.

Respectfully submitted,

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