

# HIV Research on Pause

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Impacts of US government cuts on HIV R&D,  
especially on HIV cure research

Mitchell Warren, Executive Director

*13 July 2025*

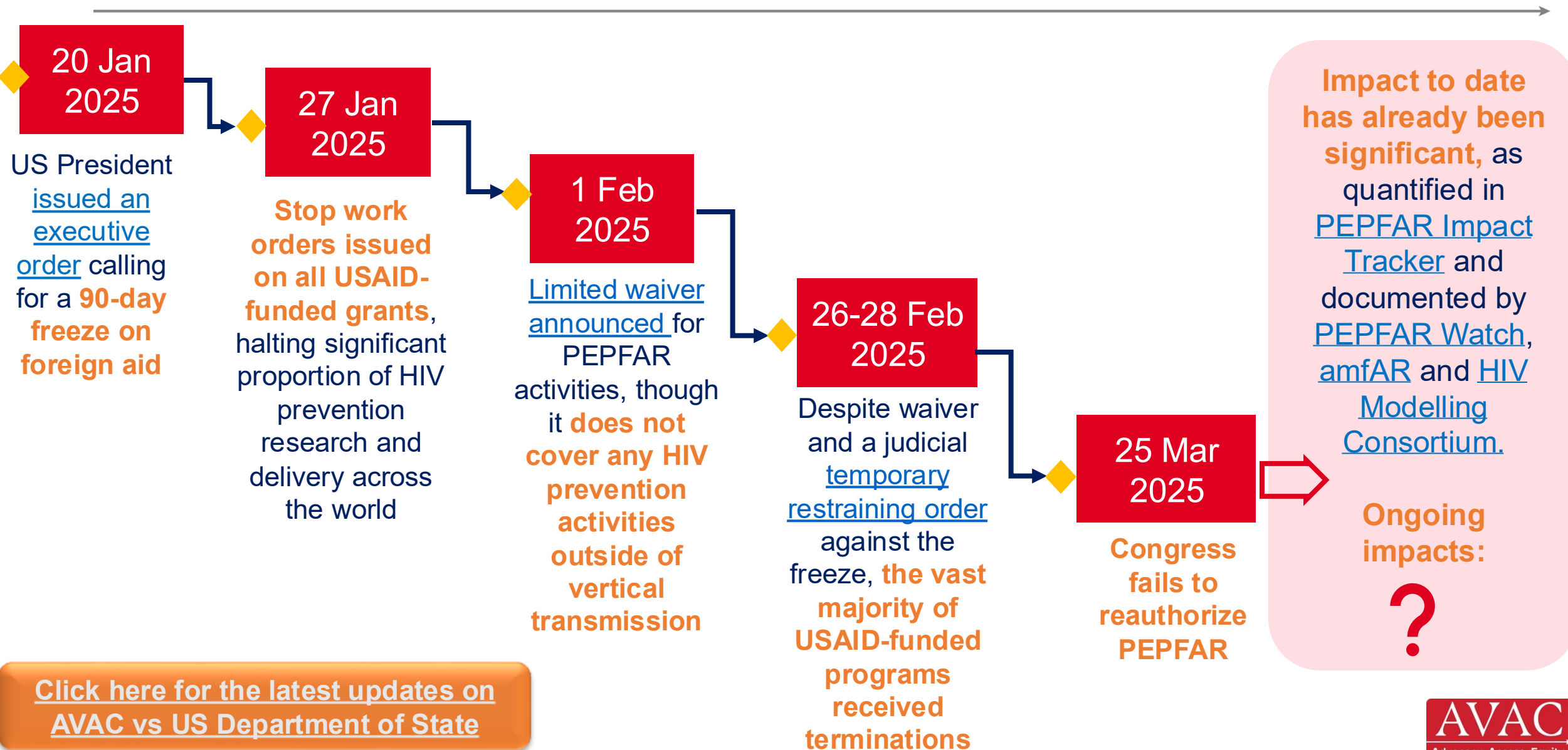
*IAS 2025 Pre-Conference Cure Workshop – Co-infections, viral and host diversity:  
Impact on HIV cure strategies*

# Caveats and Conflict of Interest

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- Special advance warning: this presentation is depressing
- I am an American citizen, voter and taxpayer who is
  - Deeply sorry
  - Deeply embarrassed
  - Incredibly angry
  - Committed to science, rights and equity
- AVAC receives funding from the US government, including from the NIH via subawards from the I4C, PAVE and REACH Martin Delaney Collaboratories, and from USAID/PEPFAR
  - We are the lead plaintiff in *AVAC vs. US Dept. of State*, which is winding its way through the US courts

# What Just Happened?



# PrEP Initiations to 2024

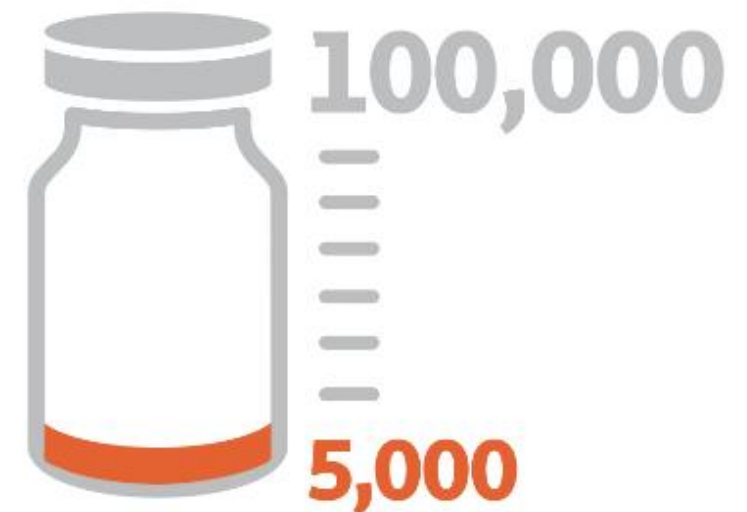
<https://www.prepwatch.org/pepfar-stop-work/>



Number of new **PrEP users** in 2024 who have **lost access to PEPFAR-supported PrEP services**



Number of people identifying as **Key Populations** who have **lost access to HIV prevention programming** under PEPFAR



**Off Target:** The PEPFAR goal of **people initiating CAB for PrEP** in 2025 is falling far short – **5k instead of 100k**

# Research Under Assault
















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## High-level snapshot of cuts to HIV-related research

- Pause on foreign aid and dismantling of USAID, including HIV Research Division
- “Pause”/ban on international research, initial focus on South Africa
- LGBTQ study terminations
- Changes in scientific review processes
- Major staff reductions – and forced reassignments
- Cap on indirect rates in grants to US academic institutions, which provide core building, laboratory and training infrastructure
- May 30, 2025: NIH cuts the two Consortia for HIV/AIDS Vaccine Development (CHAVD)



# USAID HIV Research Project Terminations: Details

Project	Product(s)	Type	Country(ries)	# of participants
	 TAF/EVG Fast-dissolving insert	MATRIX-001 Phase 1 safety and acceptability	Kenya, South Africa, USA	60
	 One month dapivirine vaginal film	MATRIX-002 Safety, acceptability, usability of placebo	Kenya, South Africa, USA, Zimbabwe	100
	 Non-ARV nonhormonal contraceptive multipurpose vaginal ring	MATRIX-003 Safety, acceptability, usability of placebo	South Africa, USA, Zimbabwe	100
	 Injectable CAB, Dapivirine Vaginal Ring, Oral TDF/FTC	Cohort study of safety in mothers and babies exposed to ARV-based prevention	Kenya, Lesotho, Zimbabwe	500-800
	 One-month dapivirine vaginal film plus levonorgestrel (LNG)	Preclinical study	USA	Preclinical
	 BG505 GT1.1 and 426c.Mod. Core-C4b	B-001 Phase 1 clinical trial	Kenya, South Africa, Uganda	48
	 Polyvalent HIV-SET saMRNA vaccine clinical program	Pre-clinical and clinical trials	Multiple African countries	Exploratory
	 CAP 256 based mRNA vaccine candidates incl Africa-based mRNA manufacturing	Development program	Multiple African countries	Exploratory
	 Multiple founder virus-based vaccines	Exploratory program	Multiple African countries	Exploratory
	 Tech-transfer activities in Uganda with SOSIP trimers	Technology transfer	Uganda	Exploratory
<b>ADVANCE</b>	 Mosaic Trimers: MOS1SIP, MOS2SIP, M3SIP8 and MPLA	Vaccine	Rwanda, Zambia	40
	 Multisite Adolescent Girls and Young Women study	MAGY Epidemiological study	Uganda, Zambia, Kenya, South Africa	1,210
	 Injectable CAB, Dapivirine Vaginal Ring, Oral TDF/FTC	CATALYST Implementation Science Study	Kenya, Lesotho, South Africa, Uganda, Zimbabwe	7,500
	 Injectable CAB, Dapivirine Vaginal Ring	Policy and programmatic support, including user-centered research and technical assistance	Botswana, Eswatini, Kenya, Lesotho, Namibia, South Africa, Uganda, Zambia, Zimbabwe	Community-based
	 Dapivirine Vaginal Ring, Oral TDF/FTC	Increasing PrEP Options for Women in Eswatini	Eswatini	400
	 PrEP, vaccines and multipurpose technologies	Research translation and preparedness, policy support and advocacy to support prevention research	Kenya, Lesotho, Malawi, Nigeria, South Africa, Uganda, Zambia, Zimbabwe	Community-based

# NIH Cuts – Part 1

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**Trump plans \$18B NIH budget cut, wants 27 centers consolidated into 5**

## *Trump Administration Slashes Research Into L.G.B.T.Q. Health*

Nearly half of the N.I.H. grants canceled through early May — together worth more than \$800 million — addressed the health of sexual and gender minority groups, The Times found.

**Overseas grants could be ‘closed down’ by NIH under new policy, internal email suggests**

Top agency official directs sweeping review of grants with a foreign component

## **‘Borders on the insane’: New NIH policy on funding foreign scientists stirs outrage**

Agency will make researchers outside United States seek grants of their own rather than “subawards” from U.S. scientists

# NIH: Major Retrenchment

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## Top-line cuts

- Nearly [2500 medical research grants ended or delayed as of May 2025](#)
  - 191 HIV-related grants terminated, worth over ~\$200M
  - Primary topics for NIH grant termination: DEI, "gender ideology", sexual minorities, vaccine hesitancy, mRNA vaccines, and SA/foreign subgranting
- No inclusion of subawards to ANY international partners and awards to be handled directly by NIH – new policy coming Sept 30
  - Temporary reprieves and reinstatements started in July
- NIH's workforce to be cut by 1,200-1,300 staffers
  - Including leaders of NIAID, NIAID's Division of Microbiology and Infectious Diseases, Fogarty International Center, chief bioethicist
- President's "skinny" budget for fiscal year 2026 would codify **another 40% reduction**, or \$18B in funding, plus \$3.6B for CDC and \$5.2B for NSF

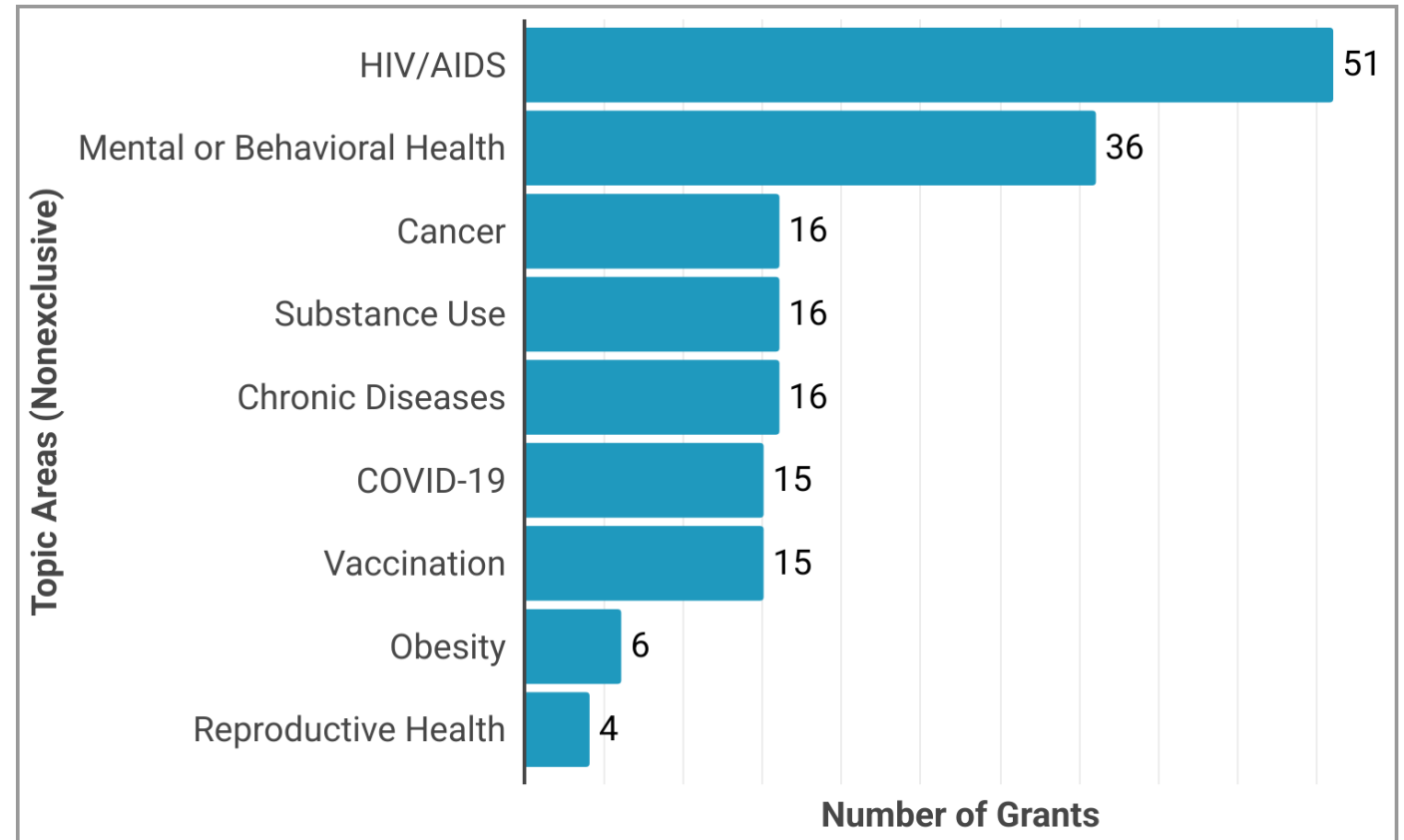


# NIH: Cuts to Clinical Trials

Total NIH termination of grants—unprecedented in history of agency

- \$19B lost funding = 777 terminated grants
- \$643M = 113 active clinical trials terminated
- 56% (\$~360M) of terminated **clinical trials** related to HIV

Terminated NIH Grants with Active Clinical Trials



Source: Association of American Medical Colleges

# HIV/AIDS Clinical Trials Networks

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## Details on major clinical trials networks

- 30% of funding withheld from semi-annual Notice of Awards for NIAID's DAIDS-funded trial networks (ACTG, HPTN, HVTN, IMPAACT)
  - ~\$300M per year to networks = ~ \$90M cut for just six months
  - Restricts funding for international research activities, mRNA
- NICHD-funded Adolescent Medicine Trials Network for HIV/AIDS Interventions (ATN) was halted in March
  - \$18M cut with immediate effect, partially reinstated in May
  - ATN led pioneering work on HIV prevention and treatment interventions for adolescents and young adults

# Martin Delaney Collaboratories (MDCs)

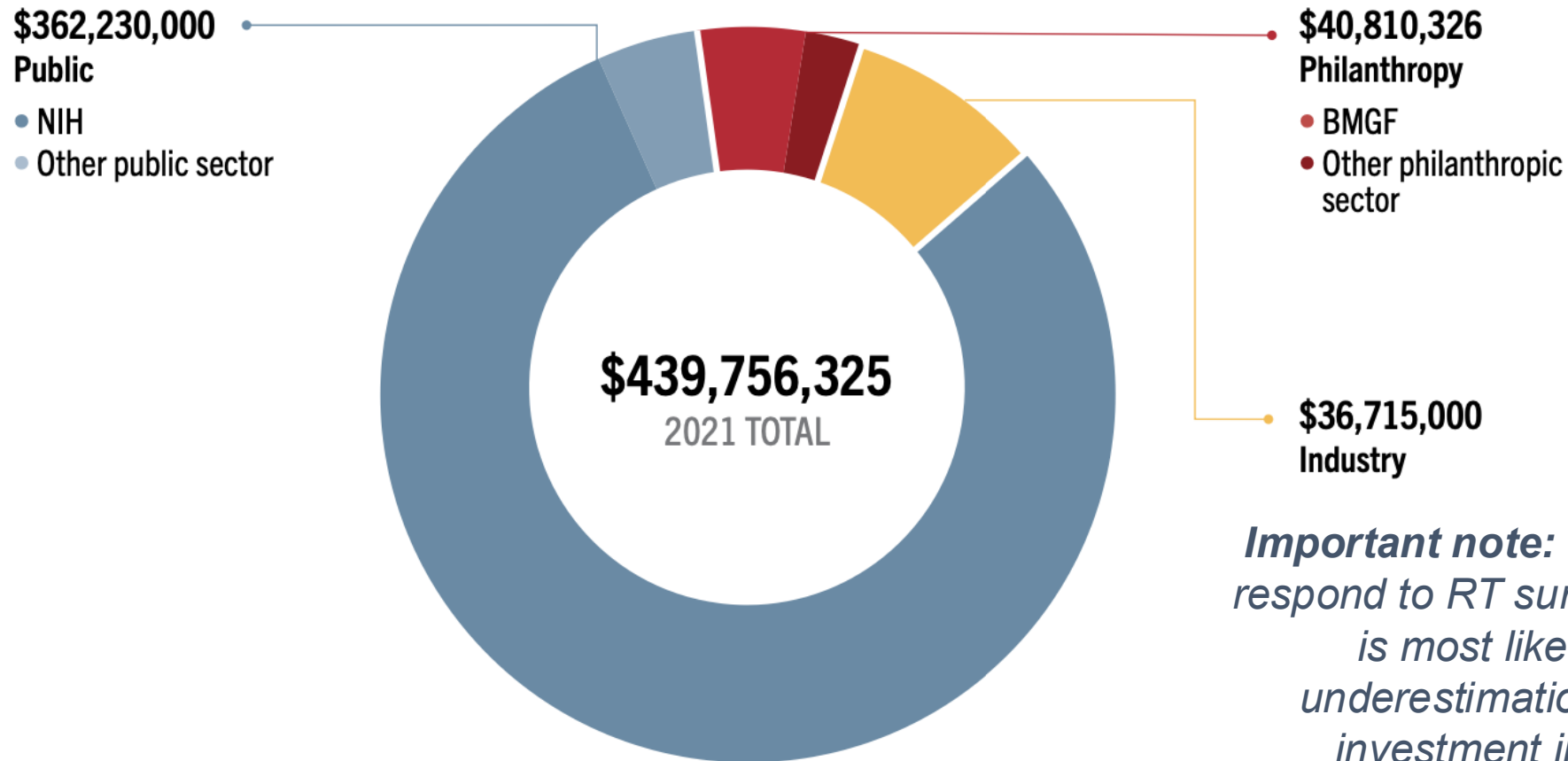
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The good news: this is not the worst news

- Major delays in granting Year 5 funds (May 2025-April 2026)
  - Only 4 of the 10 MDCs now have funding in place for the current year
  - Restricts funding for international research activities
- Concept for next cycle of MDCs is pending review by NIAID's Council

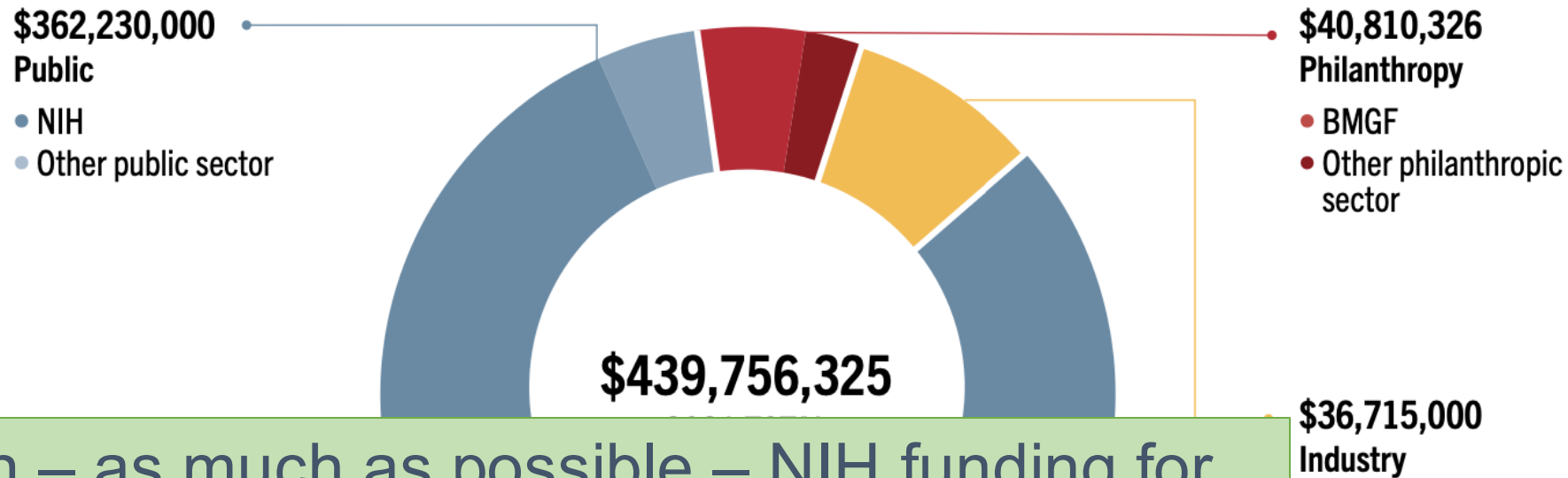
# HIV Cure Investments

## By Sector



# HIV Cure Investments – Now What?

## By Sector



Sustain – as much as possible – NIH funding for HIV cure research:

- If NIH truly cuts 40% of its total budget...
- ...and 40% of its cure funding...
- ...and other donors don't increase...
- Then **total cure funding would drop to \$298m**



# And then it got even worse...

Breaking News, May 30, 2025

## *Trump Administration Ends Program Critical to Search for an H.I.V. Vaccine*

The termination is the latest in a series of cuts to H.I.V. research and programs to prevent the disease.

**'Devastating': NIH cancels future funding plans for HIV vaccine consortia**

Researchers decry agency's decision just as new leads reinvigorate search for long-sought vaccine

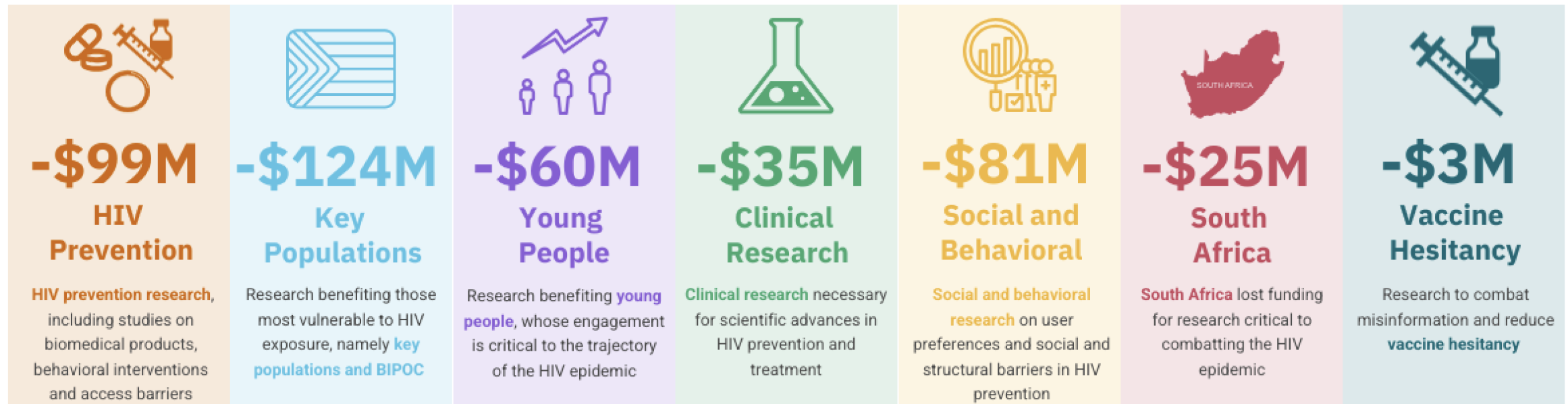
May 30, 2025

The Trump administration has dealt a sharp blow to work on H.I.V. vaccines, terminating a [\\$258 million program](#) whose work was instrumental to the search for a vaccine.

**Trump administration ending multiple HIV vaccine studies, scientists and officials say**

# The Cost of Cutting HIV Research

NIH terminated 191 HIV-specific grants in 2025, slashing over \$200 million from key HIV prevention research grants<sup>1</sup>



<sup>1</sup>Grants may cover more than one research area, so total across categories shown here exceeds \$200 million in total funding lost

Not included: estimated \$300M funding to CHAVDs to begin in 2026

# Glimmer of Hope:

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Breaking News: June 15: Federal judge rules hundreds of grant terminations illegal; July 3: some SA grants restored

## *Trump's Cuts to N.I.H. Grants Focused on Minority Groups Are Illegal, Judge Rules*

The judge accused the Trump administration of discriminating against racial minorities and L.G.B.T.Q. people and ordered the government to restore much of the funding.

**NIH restores grants to South Africa scientists, adds funding option for other halted foreign projects**

A policy tweak to the ban on foreign “subawards” should allow clinical trials worldwide to continue

# The Way(s) Forward

- We are not going back to 19 January 2025...



"SIX WEEKS ON THE JOB! HAS IT BEEN THAT LONG ALREADY?"

# The Way(s) Forward

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- ...must build for the future



“We are in the middle of a massive earthquake. When buildings fall, we can’t just build back what we had before. We need a whole new global health funding architecture, but we won’t be able to build it fast enough to avoid significant harm.”

<https://www.science.org/content/article/trump-has-blown-massive-hole-global-health-funding-and-no-one-can-fill-it>



# The Way(s) Forward

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## Some guiding principles (and/or random thoughts)

- Prioritize, Prioritize, Prioritize – like we've never prioritized before
- Don't miss out on innovation
- Think health systems – not disease- or product-specific
- Think differently
- And collaborate differently – in new ways and with different stakeholders
- Re-define sustainability – and make sure it is not just about money
- Local ownership & leadership

# The Way(s) Forward

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- ...must build for the future

**The New York Times**

## ***Trump Administration Dialing Back Support for H.I.V. Prevention***

The move follows cuts to prevention and treatment efforts worldwide with the shuttering of U.S.A.I.D.

“We’ve got to snap out of any paralysis or any disbelief or shock, and we’ve really got to look at what needs to be built in the future. “One of the biggest tragedies in all of this would be if we let this narrative be written entirely by people who don’t understand science or health care or research or foreign assistance,”

<https://www.nytimes.com/2025/03/19/health/cdc-hiv-prevention-treatment.html>

# Further resources

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- [AVAC Impact Trackers](#)
- Weekly [Global Health Watch](#), AVAC
- [Science in the Crosshairs: Research Advocacy in a Time of Crisis](#), Choice Agenda webinar recording, slides and resources
- [The Best Investment You Didn't Know You Made: How NIH Funding Fuels Innovation and Economic Growth](#), amfAR
- [Quick Take: HIV Research Matters for America](#), amfAR & O'Neill Institute
- [Impact of NIH Grant Terminations](#), Association of American Medical Colleges
- [Research Matters Advocacy Toolkit](#), AVAC, TAG, HIVMA
- [NIH halts more collaborations with South Africa on HIV/AIDS trials](#), Science
- [We do the sums: The NIH funds \\$350-million \(R6.65-billion\) of research in SA](#), Bhekisisa
- [Inside the Bloodbath at the NIH](#), The Nation

# Acknowledgements

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Gates Foundation

