

ICYMI: What Is at Stake for 2026 NIH Funding

Medical researchers, patients, and doctors across the country are warning that any funding cuts to the National Institutes of Health (NIH) will slow medical progress and limit access to treatments that improve health outcomes. In opinion pieces published in Pennsylvania, they note NIH support is the infrastructure allowing studies to launch, clinical trials to advance, and new therapies to reach patients. Without it, the pipeline for medical innovation and life-saving care will not function.

In [PennLive](#), Dr. Chris Sciamanna, a professor at Penn State College of Medicine, explains how NIH support enables his team to determine if a five-minute daily exercise routine can preserve mobility among older adults. Mobility loss is one of the primary drivers of nursing home admissions and contributes to rising Medicaid costs in Pennsylvania. Without stable NIH funding, research that can reduce long-term care dependence and delay institutionalization will not be completed.

“As a primary care physician, I have witnessed firsthand how scientific research has benefited my patients by offering a constant stream of ever-more effective treatments. We need Congress’s support to continue medical research and break new ground on serious conditions that afflict far too many of us, including immobility.”

In the [Bucks County Herald](#), Jon Nelson shares how NIH-backed clinical trials changed the trajectory of his treatment-resistant depression. A brain stimulation procedure developed through the NIH BRAIN Initiative restored his ability to work and eliminated suicidal thoughts after traditional therapies failed. Nelson notes that cutting support for the Initiative would limit the development of next-generation treatments for millions of Americans living with similar conditions.

“I am living proof of the power of medical research. But there are millions more like me in the United States, people with treatment-resistant depression who need the kind of help that, so far, only a handful of people in my clinical trial have been able to receive. (I know nine others who have had the surgery, and each is in remission.) Treatment-resistant depression affects up to 30% of people with major depressive disorder.”

In [The Kansas City Star](#), Brent Donelan discusses the impact of retinitis pigmentosa, a retinal disease that leaves victims blind, on his son Patrick. Through NIH-funded research at the University of Iowa, Patrick has participated in promising clinical trials that could determine whether adult stem cells could be implanted in his eyes. Donelan notes the search for a cure, made possible by federal funding, could help Patrick and many others live more fulfilling lives.

“There are millions of Americans like Patrick who live with conditions that challenge or, worse, destroy their lives. In the past century, scientific research has helped treat and even cure some of our deadliest diseases. Additional breakthroughs might be imminent. The United States can continue to pioneer treatments that make a real difference in the quality and length of people’s lives, as long as we keep investing, consistently and vigorously, in medical research.”

In [The Beacon](#) (Kansas City, Mo.), Dr. Jason Stubbs is featured describing his efforts to prove that dietary phosphate drives kidney disease progression. For nearly 15 years, Dr. Stubbs has operated a lab that depends on consistent federal funding to maintain staff and continue testing. He explains that he is almost on the brink of making a major breakthrough via a therapy that successfully targets the correct

phosphate in mice, but disruptions to his lab's NIH funding have put his nearly complete research in jeopardy.

"As a doctor who sees patients every week, Stubbs understands the urgency. Kidney disease is difficult to treat, and it is devastating. Kidneys are central to filtering toxins out of the body and keeping all organ systems healthy. Someone whose kidneys aren't functioning properly faces terrible outcomes. But there aren't many medicines doctors can prescribe that will slow down the disease's progression. Stubbs believes his research has real potential to help. But until his grant comes through, he won't be able to push ahead and get back up to speed. And patients won't benefit anytime soon from a potentially promising treatment."

Americans for Medical Research, supported by Research!America, calls on Americans to imagine what's possible with continued investments in medical research. Using real stories from families, patients, and researchers whose lives are touched by NIH-funded medical research, our efforts support groundbreaking research to make more progress on the diseases that impact American families every day. To learn more, visit americansformedicalresearch.org.