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SELECT COMMITTEE ON THE STRATEGIC  
COMPETITION BETWEEN THE  
UNITED STATES AND THE  
CHINESE COMMUNIST PARTY

August 15, 2025

Honorable Robert F. Kennedy, Jr.  
Secretary  
U.S. Department of Health and Human Services  
200 Independence Ave. SW  
Washington, D.C. 20201

Dear Secretary Kennedy,

As you release your second “Make America Healthy Again” report, I call on you to take obvious steps to truly make America healthy. Specifically, I call on you to stop cuts to the National Institutes of Health (NIH), including for cancer research. The patients of today and tomorrow are relying on you doing the right thing.

To date, your agency has taken steps that have negatively impacted critical health research. This includes failing to distribute NIH grant payments and the cancellation of grants. According to the Government Accountability Office, between February 2025 and June 2025, over 1,800 NIH grants were terminated. In addition, between February and June of Fiscal Year (FY) 2025, NIH obligated almost \$8 billion less than it had in the same time period in FY 2024.<sup>1</sup> Further, “[a]t least 172 National Cancer Institute grants, including for research aimed at minimizing health disparities among racial minorities or LGBTQ+ people, were terminated and hadn’t been reinstated as of June 16.”<sup>2</sup> As reported, “the disruptions are affecting research on Alzheimer’s, cancer and substance use, to name just a few.”<sup>3</sup>

Michigan researchers have felt the results of these actions. For instance, we have seen reports of Michigan State University cancer researcher, Jamie Bernard, having her work directly impacted. As noted in Bridge Michigan, “[a]t Michigan State University, researcher Jamie Bernard is trying to prevent some of the most aggressive and treatment-resistant forms of breast cancer... With each passing day, the associate professor feels more ‘gutted’ about the more than \$1 million in federal grants — now in limbo — that pay for the work in this cluster of labs that line a white and Spartan-green brick hallway of MSU’s Life Sciences Building.”<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.gao.gov/products/b-337203>

<sup>2</sup> <https://kffhealthnews.org/news/article/national-cancer-institute-nih-cuts-chaos-scientific-biomedical-research/#:~:text=At%20least%20172%20National%20Cancer,of%20grant%20terminations%20by%20outside>

<sup>3</sup> <https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2025/06/04/health/trump-cuts-nih-grants-research.html>

<sup>4</sup> <https://bridgemi.com/talent-education/gutted-michigan-losing-200m-fed-research-funding-more-limbo/>

Sadly however, for the President's FY 2026 Budget, you doubled down on efforts that harm the NIH. The budget calls for an \$18 billion overall cut to NIH<sup>5</sup> and a \$2.7 billion cut to the National Cancer Institute (NCI).<sup>6</sup> This is a 37.2% cut to the institution that leads cancer research for our country, as the nation faces increasing rates of early onset cancer.<sup>7</sup> This includes rising early onset colorectal cancer rates in the State of Michigan.<sup>8</sup>

The American Cancer Society Cancer Action Network has stated that these cuts "will set this nation back dramatically in our ability to reduce death and suffering from a disease that is expected to kill more than 618,000 Americans this year alone."<sup>9</sup> A July 2025 Congressional Budget Office report found that proposed cuts at the NIH could lower the number of new drugs that come to market in the next three decades.<sup>10</sup> One scientist put it best regarding these cuts, "[p]eople will die."<sup>11</sup>

Cuts to NIH will also harm Michigan's economy. According to the Citizens Research Council of Michigan, "[i]nstitutions in Michigan receive about \$1 billion per year in National Institutes of Health (NIH) grants, accounting for an economic impact about \$2.5 billion."<sup>12</sup> Others have noted, "[i]n 2024, U-M received \$734 million in NIH grants supporting more than 2,700 separate projects and 4,125 faculty, postdoctoral and graduate students. MSU and Henry Ford-MSU Health Science received a total of \$110 million in 2024; Wayne State, \$73 million, of which \$10 million has been cut; Oakland University, \$4.7 million; Michigan Technological University, \$4.3 million; Western Michigan and its medical school, \$2.5 million; and Central Michigan University, \$1.9 million."<sup>13</sup> Cuts to NIH will hurt Michigan's economy, plain and simple.

Frankly Mr. Secretary, I call on you to open your eyes. This data speaks for itself. As Secretary of the Department of Health and Human Services, you should fight for every research dollar that will help families fight cancer. You should support our researchers, our universities, and the local economies that benefit from their work. As you release the second "Make America Healthy Again" report, I call on you to live up to the title that you hold, stop cuts to NIH and NCI, and fight for patients.

Sincerely,



Haley Stevens  
Member of Congress

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<sup>5</sup> <https://www.whitehouse.gov/wp-content/uploads/2025/05/Fiscal-Year-2026-Discretionary-Budget-Request.pdf>

<sup>6</sup> <https://www.fightcancer.org/releases/future-cancer-cures-jeopardy-president-proposes-massive-cuts-national-cancer-institute>

<sup>7</sup> <https://www.uchicagomedicine.org/forefront/cancer-articles/why-are-more-young-people-getting-cancer>

<sup>8</sup> <https://www.detroitnews.com/story/news/local/michigan/2024/06/04/experts-unsure-why-certain-colorectal-cancer-rates-have-nearly-doubled-in-michigan/73807132007/>

<sup>9</sup> <https://thehill.com/newsletters/health-care/5329525-white-house-hhs-budget-nih/>

<sup>10</sup> <https://www.cbo.gov/publication/61373>

<sup>11</sup> <https://kffhealthnews.org/news/article/national-cancer-institute-nih-cuts-chaos-scientific-biomedical-research/>

<sup>12</sup> <https://crcmich.org/michigan-has-options-to-respond-to-cuts-to-federal-research-grants>

<sup>13</sup> <https://bridgemi.com/talent-education/gutted-michigan-losing-200m-fed-research-funding-more-limbo/>