

Trump Budget Blueprint Slashes NIH Funding By \$5.8 Billion Just As Cures Law Kicks In

President Donald Trump proposes to slash National Institutes of Health funding by \$5.8 billion in fiscal 2018, which if approved by Congress would deal a major blow to the bipartisan effort to bolster NIH through the recently enacted 21st Century Cures Act. Trump's budget blueprint calls for a major reorganization of NIH centers and institutes, consolidation across NIH's organizations and changes how much money the federal government will contribute to research funding.

The budget blueprint appears to defer to congressional appropriators on funding Cures. It states, "The 21st Century CURES Act permitted funds to be appropriated each year for certain activities outside of the discretionary caps so long as the appropriations were specifically provided for the authorized purposes."

Trump's blueprint would reduce NIH's funding level to \$25.9 billion, eliminate the Fogarty International Center and move the Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality into NIH.

The Budget includes a major reorganization of NIH's Institutes and Centers to help focus resources on the highest priority research and training activities, including: eliminating the Fogarty International Center; consolidating the Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality within NIH; and other consolidations

and structural changes across NIH organizations and activities. The Budget also reduces administrative costs and rebalance Federal contributions to research funding.

The proposed NIH funding cut was promptly criticized by lawmakers and research advocates.

Chris Hansen, president of the American Cancer Society Cancer Action Network (ACS CAN), said the proposed cuts, if approved by Congress, would slash NIH by 19 percent and would likely result in a \$1 billion cut to the National Cancer Institute (NCI). Hansen noted the proposed cuts come less than six months after Congress passed the 21st Century Cures Act. "This bill represented lawmakers' overwhelming bipartisan commitment to the promise and necessity of medical research to our country's future. Now is the time for Congress to capitalize on that investment rather than reverse course by drastically curtailing NIH research funding," he said.

House Appropriations Committee Chairman Rodney Frelinghuysen (R-NJ) noted Congress will have final say over the appropriations process. As directed under the Constitution, Congress has the power of the purse. While the President may offer proposals, Congress must review both requests to assure the wise investment of taxpayer dollars.