



ANTHONY G. BROWN, MARYLAND ATTORNEY GENERAL

# PRESS RELEASE

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Media Contacts:  
[press@oag.state.md.us](mailto:press@oag.state.md.us)  
410-576-7009

## **Attorney General Brown Sues Trump Administration for Defunding Medical and Public Health Innovation Research *Coalition of 22 Attorneys General Challenge NIH Funding Cuts for Universities and Research Institutions***

**BALTIMORE, MD (February 10, 2025)** – Attorney General Anthony G. Brown and 21 other attorneys general today sued the Trump administration, the Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS), and the National Institutes of Health (NIH) for unlawfully cutting funds that support cutting-edge medical and public health research at universities and research institutions across the country.

The coalition is challenging the Trump administration’s attempt to unilaterally cut “indirect cost” reimbursements at every research institution throughout the country. These reimbursements cover expenses to facilitate biomedical research, like lab, faculty, infrastructure, and utility costs. Without them, the lifesaving and life-changing medical research in which the United States has long been a leader, could be compromised. Indirect cost reimbursements are based on each institution’s unique needs, negotiated with the federal government through a carefully regulated process, and then memorialized in an executed agreement. The Trump administration purports to toss those agreements aside, putting public health and medical advancements at risk. The coalition’s lawsuit seeks to prevent that reckless and illegal conduct.

The lawsuit was filed today in the U.S. District Court for the District of Massachusetts and can be found [here](#).

Most NIH-funded research occurs outside of federal government institutions, such as at public and private universities and colleges. In Maryland, this includes over \$300 million combined in direct NIH funding to the University of Maryland Baltimore and the University of Maryland College Park, and additional funding to other higher education institutions in the state. NIH’s proposed reduction of UMB’s Indirect Cost Rate would eliminate \$49.5 million annually in NIH indirect and passthrough funding that UMB uses to support its research programs.

“Maryland’s research institutions have pioneered treatments that have saved countless lives, but they can’t do this vital work without proper funding,” said Attorney General Brown. “This decision not only jeopardizes Maryland jobs and our state’s position as a global leader in medical research, but it also delays or denies potentially lifesaving discoveries that could help our loved ones.”

On Friday, February 7, the NIH announced it would abruptly slash indirect cost rates to an across-the-board 15% rate, which is significantly less than the cost required to perform cutting edge medical research. The NIH purported to make this cut effective the very next business day, Monday, February 10, giving universities and institutions no time to plan for the enormous budget gaps they are now facing. Without immediate relief, this action could result in the suspension of lifesaving and life-extending clinical trials, disruption of research programs, layoffs, and laboratory closures.

The coalition argues that this action violates the Administrative Procedure Act, including a directive Congress passed during President Trump’s first term to fend off his earlier proposal to drastically cut research reimbursements. That statutory language, still in effect, prohibits the NIH from requiring categorical and indiscriminate changes to indirect cost reimbursements. The coalition is seeking a court order barring the Trump administration and NIH from implementing the action.

The NIH is the primary source of federal funding for medical research in the United States. Medical research funded by NIH grants has led to innumerable scientific breakthroughs, including the discovery of treatment for cancers of all types, the first sequencing of DNA and the development of the MRI. Additionally, dozens of NIH-supported scientists have earned Nobel Prizes for their groundbreaking scientific work.

Joining Attorney General Brown in this filing are the attorneys general of Arizona, California, Connecticut, Colorado, Delaware, Hawaii, Illinois, Maine, Massachusetts, Michigan, Minnesota, Nevada, New Jersey, New Mexico, New York, North Carolina, Oregon, Rhode Island, Vermont, Washington, and Wisconsin.

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