AMP
AMERICANS FOR MEDICAL PROGRESS

We keep medical advances *moving ahead.*

December 11, 2025

The Honorable Jay Bhattacharya, MD, PhD
Director
National Institutes of Health

Nicole Kleinstreuer, PhD
Acting Deputy Director for Program Coordination, Planning, and Strategic Initiatives
National Institutes of Health

Dear Drs. Bhattacharya and Kleinstreuer,

On behalf of Americans for Medical Progress (AMP), we are writing regarding forthcoming congressional correspondence urging NIH to "follow the example" of CDC, which is reportedly moving to end its internal primate research program.[1] Based on available information, this change does not appear to have been the product of a formal scientific advisory process, nor the result of consultation with subject-matter experts.

For these reasons, AMP believes it is inappropriate to treat CDC's decision as a scientific benchmark for federal policy. Prematurely ending NIH's support for primate research programs is inconsistent with the agency's publicly stated priorities and would undermine years of strategic investment intended to sustain national preparedness and innovation in biomedical science. Importantly, NIH's own FY 2026 Congressional Justification[2] underscores the critical role of primate research — including the centralized infrastructure provided by the NPRCs — in advancing human health and anticipating future scientific challenges. Such budget documentation affirms that nonhuman primate (NHP) research remains a foundational component of NIH's research mission.

Because of the profound public health and scientific stakes, ending support for primate research (including the NPRCs) would be a grave mistake. While we fully support NIH's leadership in advancing New Approach Methodologies (NAMs) and emerging technologies, efforts to reduce animal use must be aligned with ongoing scientific and public health needs. NHP models continue to provide essential insights that cannot yet be fully replaced by in vitro, organ-based, or rodent systems alone, particularly for complex diseases, vaccine development, and translational work requiring close physiologic similarity to humans. Eliminating access to these models too early could hinder advancements in treating diseases like Alzheimer's, stroke, diabetes, infectious diseases, and other conditions affecting the American population.

Finally, recent claims that NAMs should not be considered "complements" to animal studies directly contradict NIH's public statements and initiatives[3] while disregarding the foundational intent of the 3Rs—refine, reduce, and replace. Focusing solely on replacement hinders NIH's goal of safeguarding and enhancing the health of Americans and could set science back in fields lacking validated alternatives.

[1] Grimm, D. (2025, November 21). Exclusive: CDC to end all monkey research. *Science*. https://www.science.org/content/article/exclusive-cdc-end-all-monkey-research
[2] National Institutes of Health, Office of the Director. (2025). *FY 2026 Congressional Justification*. https://officeofbudget.od.nih.gov/pdfs/FY26/inst-submissions/OD_FY26_CJ_Chapter.pdf
[3] National Institutes of Health, Common Fund. *Complement Animal Research In Experimentation (Complement-ARIE) program*. https://commonfund.nih.gov/complementarie

When used alongside other tools, NAMs strengthen research; they should not be positioned as categorical substitutes in fields where they are not yet scientifically sufficient.

We respectfully urge NIH to:

- Reaffirm the need for animal studies when scientifically necessary, and that such studies are strengthened—not diminished—by the development and integration of NAMs;

- Communicate clearly that NIH supports the full 3Rs framework, and that reducing and refining animal use are essential components of advancing public health and animal welfare; and

- Prioritize an integrative, convergence-driven research agenda whereby NAMs and animal studies work together to maximize translational and predictive power, including investment in cross-validation studies that can compare data across multiple platforms.

AMP welcomes the opportunity to assist NIH in navigating these nuanced discussions, including providing subject matter expertise and engaging with biomedical research stakeholders. Decisions of this magnitude should be informed by rigorous science, thoughtful analysis, and the leadership of the agencies most equipped to evaluate the implications for public health and animal welfare.

Given the urgency and potential impact of these discussions, we respectfully request a response within 60 days of receipt and also welcome the opportunity to meet with you or your designees to discuss these issues in greater detail.

Thank you for your continued commitment to advancing biomedical research, scientific innovation, and public health.

Sincerely,

Paula Clifford, MLA, RLATG, CVT
Executive Director
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cc: The Honorable Martin Makary, M.D.,
Commissioner, U.S. Food and Drug Administration