

NCI Director's Report: Realities and opportunities for cancer research

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Director, National Cancer Institute

91st Meeting of the NCI Council of Research Advocates (NCRA)

March 5, 2024

@NCIDirector
@TheNCI

Today's Topics:

1. Brief introduction
2. Budget outlook
3. Research highlights
4. Q&A

A little about me

Background in brief:

- Scientist
- Clinician, oncologist
- Educator/mentor
- Health care management and administration
- Leader
- Advocacy
- Basketball player (and aficionado)

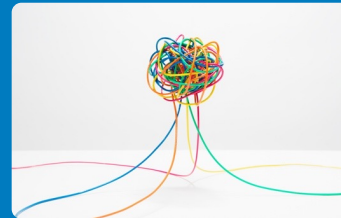
Principles I value



Listening, openness



Teamwork, collaboration



Solving complex problems

Patient story



A story about advocacy, collaboration, and impact



Meeting and
treating “Paul”



Connecting with
advocates through
social media



Think tank
meeting



Creating RMC Alliance



IMPACT:
Improved health outcomes,
clinical trials, information,
visibility, education, grants

Budget outlook

Where we are today



**Potential lapses in
appropriation
averted:**

September 30, 2023
November 17, 2023
February 2, 2024



**Current Continuing
Resolution expires
March 22**
(halfway through the
fiscal year).



**Interim grant policies
have been set.**
Final adjustments will
be made when NCI
receives a full-year
appropriation.

NCI's budget is determined within the federal budget ecosystem

alongside many other
national priorities

Appropriations bills under consideration

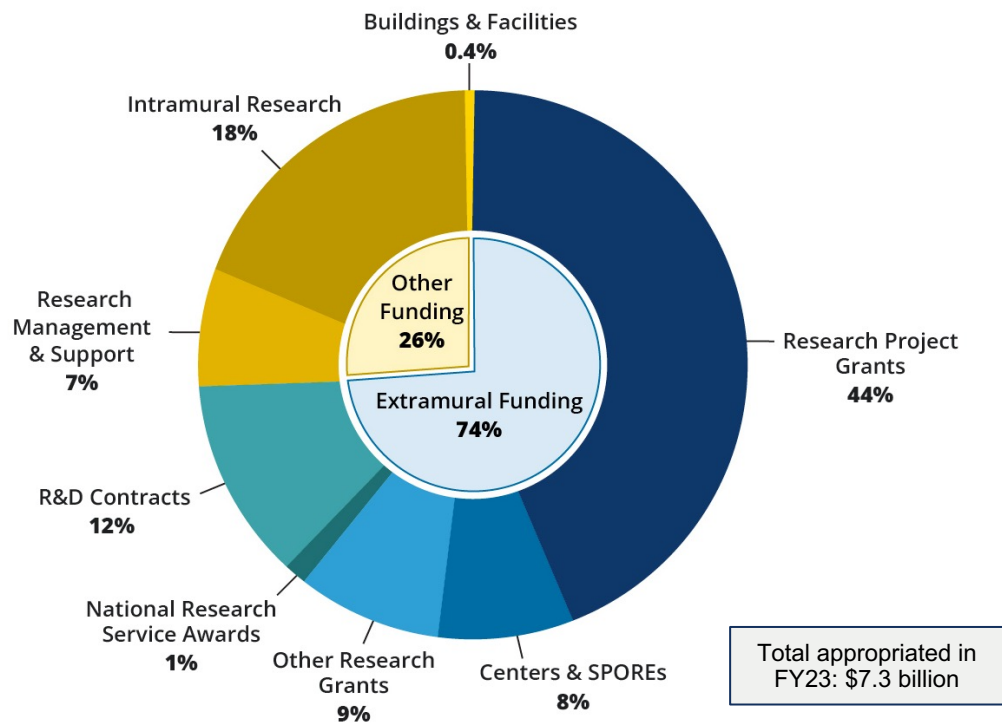
March 8

- Agriculture, Rural Development, FDA, and Related Agencies
- Commerce, Justice, Science, and Related Agencies
- Energy and Water Development
- Interior, Environment, and Related Agencies
- Military Construction, Veterans Affairs, and Related Agencies
- Transportation, Housing and Urban Development, and Related Agencies

March 22

- Defense
- Financial Services and General Government
- Homeland Security
- ***Labor, Health and Human Services, Education, and Related Agencies***
- Legislative Branch
- State, Foreign Operations, and Related Programs

How NCI spends its budget



Major areas of NCI's work span more than one of the categories in the chart:

- Clinical trials
- Training & career development
- Basic science

These efforts are funded through multiple mechanisms and approaches, including:

- Intramural research
- Extramural research
- National networks
- Research project grants

What it would cost to make the most rapid progress against cancer

	NCI's Professional Judgment Budget Proposal	President's Budget Proposal for NCI	Actual NCI Budget
FY 2024	\$9.988B	\$7.8B <ul style="list-style-type: none">• 6.9% increase of total NCI budget (compared to FY23 enacted)• Includes \$216M for Cancer Moonshot	?
FY 2025	\$11.466B	?	?

NCI Fiscal Year 2025 Professional Judgment Budget Proposal

NIH NATIONAL CANCER INSTITUTE



Leading Progress against Cancer
NCI Fiscal Year 2025 Professional Judgment Budget Proposal

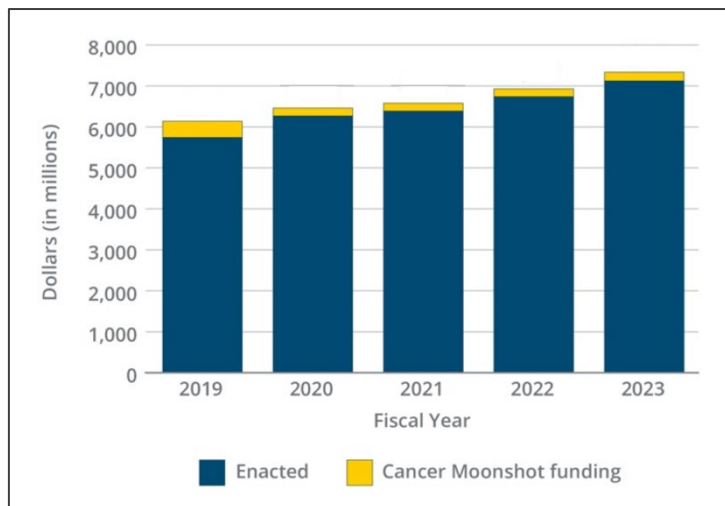
View the budget proposal and the Director's Message:
www.cancer.gov/research/leading-progress

Highlighted Scientific Opportunities

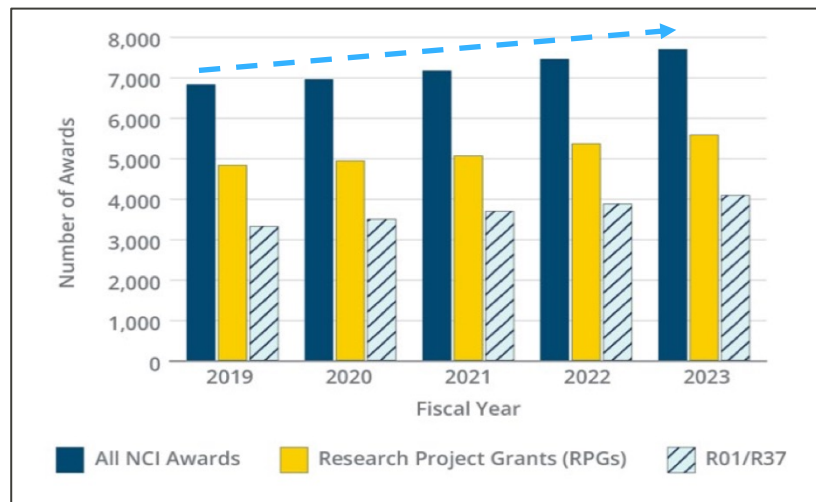
- Improving patients' lives through symptom science research
- Revolutionizing cancer clinical trials
- Clarifying the impact of the environment on cancer risk
- Harnessing the power of cancer data
- Unraveling the complexity of cancer metastasis

NCI has been funding more awards year over year

**NCI Budget History (appropriations)
FY19 – FY23**



**NCI Grant Awards (competing and non-competing)
FY19 – FY23**



A “flat” budget is not truly flat – it is a reduction

Why?

- End of 21st Century Cures Act funding for the Cancer MoonshotSM
- Research costs and salaries increase (COLA)
- Non-negotiable expenses for NCI increase each year by \$75M to \$100M
- RPG cost increases \$250M annually to fully fund at current levels

Available levers to manage constrained budget:

Research Project Grants (RPGs)

- Decrease the “payline” for new awards
- Fund non-competing awards < 100%

Cancer Center Support Grants (CCSGs)

- Forgo increases for competing renewals
- Decreases to non-competing CCSGs

Cancer Training Awards

- Fewer new awards (F’s, K’s, T’s)

Specialized Programs of Research Excellence (SPORE) Grants

- Fewer new awards
- Decreases to non-competing awards

Intramural Research Program

- Planned budget reductions
- Reduced hiring
- Decreased contractor utilization
- Trim programs

Resources about NCI budget and appropriations



Sept. 6, 2023 NCAB meeting: NCI budget overview
www.videocast.nih.gov/watch=52268&start=3723

NCI's Fiscal Year 2024 Budget Challenges and Interim Paylines Explained

Subscribe

November 15, 2023, by NCI Acting Director, Dr. Douglas R. Lowy

UPDATE: Since this blog was posted on November 15, Congress passed another short-term continuing resolution that extends funding for the National Institutes of Health at last fiscal year's budget levels through February 2, 2024. In this post, NCI Acting Director Dr. Lowy describes key challenges that this "flat" budget presents to NCI and its effects on NCI's ability to support cancer research. He also discusses newly announced interim paylines for competing grants.



NCI *Bottom Line* blog post on FY24 budget outlook:
www.cancer.gov/grants-training/nci-bottom-line-blog/



Updated budget and appropriations page:
www.cancer.gov/about-nci/budget



NCI Fiscal Year 2025
Professional Judgment Budget Proposal:
www.cancer.gov/research/leading-progress

National Cancer Plan

Everyone has a role.

8 goals:

Prevent Cancer

Detect Cancers Early

Develop Effective Treatments

Deliver Optimal Care

Maximize Data Utility

Eliminate Inequities

Optimize the Workforce

Engage Every Person

- *Changing how we know cancer today.*
- *Reducing cancer mortality.*
- *Improving lives of people with cancer.*



THE PRESIDENT AND FIRST LADY'S

CANCER MOONSHOT

ENDING CANCER AS WE KNOW IT

Goals of the reignited Cancer Moonshot

- Reduce U.S. cancer mortality rate by 50% by 2047
- Improve the experience of people and their families living with and surviving cancer

Recent wins – some examples

Recent wins and accomplishments in cancer research

- * ✓ First FDA approval of **cell therapy in solid tumors** (tumor-infiltrating lymphocytes for advanced melanoma)
- * ✓ Launch of **Self-collection for HPV testing** to Improve Cervical Cancer Prevention (SHIP) Trial Network
- * ✓ Launch of new **Cancer Screening Research Network**
- * ✓ Launch of new **NCI Virtual Clinical Trials Office**
 - ✓ New **immunotherapy for endometrial cancer** (hard-to-treat)
 - ✓ First **immunotherapy approved for nasopharyngeal cancer**; EBV vaccine studies underway
 - ✓ **Targeted therapy for RET-positive** lung, medullary, and thyroid cancers
 - ✓ First FDA-approved **targeted therapy for children with high-risk Hodgkin lymphoma**
 - ✓ First FDA-approved **drug (immunotherapy) for advanced alveolar soft part sarcoma** (ASPS), an extremely rare cancer that mainly affects adolescents and young adults
- ✓ *...and more at **NCI Cancer Currents blog***



Breakthrough in cellular therapy for solid tumors – pioneered by decades of NCI research

Tumor-infiltrating lymphocytes (TILs) for advanced melanoma

- **First-ever FDA approval of cellular therapy for solid tumors**
- Marks a new era of cancer treatment

Exemplary model of collaboration and translational science:
basic science > clinical research > treatment development

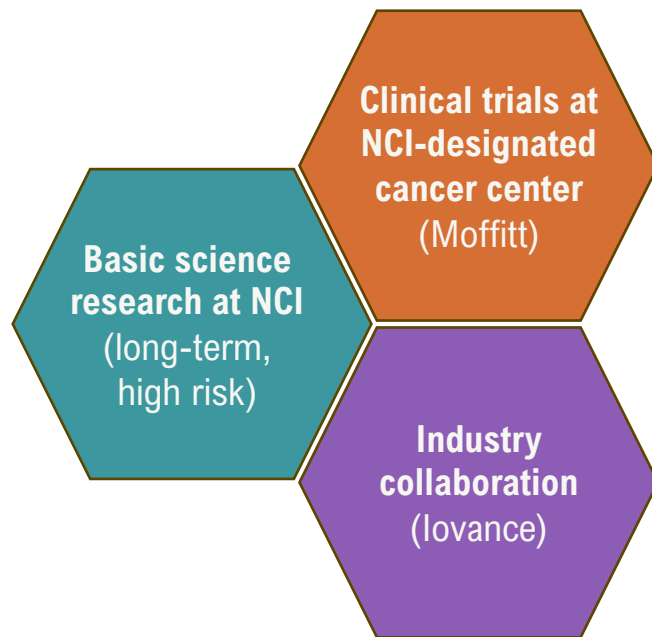
Considerations: Scaling; application to other cancers; access



Pioneered by Dr. Steven A. Rosenberg

NCI Center for Cancer Research

- ~40 years of basic science research



Contributes to National Cancer Plan goals:



New “SHIP” trial network on self-sampling for cervical cancer prevention announced at White House (January 25, 2024)



JANUARY 31, 2024

Readout of White House Cervical Cancer Forum

Last week, the Biden Cancer Moonshot hosted the White House Cervical Cancer Forum to recognize Cervical Cancer Awareness Month and spur action on education, prevention, early detection, and treatment.

As part of the Forum, National Cancer Institute (NCI) Director Kimryn Rathmell announced a new NCI-supported trial to drive progress on cervical cancer prevention. The brand new ‘Last Mile’ Initiative, [Self-collection for HPV testing to Improve Cervical Cancer Prevention \(SHIP\) Trial Network](#) aims to test the performance of multiple self-collection devices for HPV, the leading driver of cervical cancer.



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www.whitehouse.gov/briefing-room

Self-collection for HPV testing to Improve Cervical Cancer Prevention (SHIP) Trial Network

- Great example of:
 - ✓ **Broad collaboration** – within research and beyond, including federal and private sector
 - ✓ **Addressing disparities**
 - ✓ **Engaging with the community**, beneficiaries of research

Contributes to National Cancer Plan goals:



First large scale network on cancer screening launched

NCI Press Release

NIH launches research network to evaluate emerging cancer screening technologies

February 21, 2024



Goal: To evaluate emerging cancer screening technologies (e.g., multi-cancer detection blood tests) – with the ultimate aim to save lives.

CSRN is the first large scale network to focus on cancer screening.



Contributes to National Cancer Plan goals

New NCI Virtual Clinical Trials Office pilot program

NCI Media Advisory

NIH to address dwindling clinical trial patient enrollment with centralized staffing support

February 29, 2024



Image: iStock

What:

- Centralized, remote staff support for NCI-supported clinical trials activities

Aims:

- **Improve accrual and retention rate** to trials – by addressing staffing challenges and burdens of clinical research

Status:

- 6 sites selected for initial pilot phase

Contributes to National Cancer Plan goals:



Childhood Cancer Data Initiative (CCDI) continues to make progress toward National Cancer Plan goals

- Recent progress
 - **Molecular Characterization Initiative (MCI)** expands **enrollment** to children newly diagnosed with **advanced stage neuroblastoma**
 - Includes **Renal Medullary Carcinoma (RMC)**
- Upcoming events
 - **March CCDI Community Forum** (first of the year) – interactive Q&A seeks *your*/community input



CCDI continues to make important contributions to National Cancer Plan goals

WHAT IS THE CCDI MOLECULAR CHARACTERIZATION INITIATIVE?

- Provides state-of-the-art **molecular characterization at time of diagnosis** to inform optimal treatment decisions.
- A **national collaboration** between:
 - ✓ Childhood cancer community (including COG)
 - ✓ Advocates
 - ✓ Pediatric oncologists
 - ✓ Researchers
 - ✓ Data scientists
 - ✓ Children, adolescents, and young adults with cancer
 - ✓ Families

Closing thoughts

Although the budget outlook is not ideal...

We will work together across the cancer community – creatively, collaboratively, and efficiently – to make the best decisions given the tough reality.

Our work is ultimately for the benefit of people, patients and families touched by cancer.

We will use the National Cancer Plan as our roadmap toward ending cancer as we know it.



*Working together to assemble puzzle.
Image generated by AI.*

Thank You!

www.cancer.gov

www.cancer.gov/espanol

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**NATIONAL
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