

March 6, 2025

The Honorable John Thune
Majority Leader
United States Senate
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Charles Schumer
Minority Leader
United States Senate
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Mike Johnson
Speaker
House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Hakeem Jeffries
Minority Leader
House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Majority Leader Thune, Minority Leader Schumer, Speaker Johnson and Minority Leader Jeffries:

On behalf of our organization, the American Society for Transplantation and Cellular Therapy (ASTCT), we ask your support for maintaining the National Institutes of Health (NIH) funding for fiscal year (FY) 2025 and for FY 2026. As a professional membership association of more than 4,000 physicians, scientists and other health care professionals promoting bone marrow transplantation and cellular and gene therapy through research, education, scholarly publication, and clinical standards, we urge you to support maintaining NIH research funding.

For more than 25 years, ASTCT members have focused on innovative cures for patients with blood cancers and other blood and immune disorders. ASTCT members and the patients we treat rely heavily on research funding from the NIH in a variety of critical ways:

1. Innovation improves survival rates and cures patients

NIH funding has made possible the decades of research that has led directly to the therapies we now employ every day, such as hematopoietic cell transplant (HSCT) and chimeric antigen receptor T-cells (CAR-T). Despite incredible advances in our field, patients with the conditions we care for still have significant risks of death or severe complications, making ongoing research essential to continue improving outcomes. Cutting NIH funding is detrimental to research and will leave an immense gap in cancer research, specifically for the bone marrow and cell transplantation and cellular therapy field. ASTCT is committed to protecting the resources that drive innovation in this field



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because NIH-funded research dollars meaningfully translate into lives of real patients saved.

2. Clinical trials enable access to lifesaving cures

There is a direct impact to patient care when research funding is unavailable. Many of our patients participate in clinical trials funded by the NIH, partly because so many of the conditions we treat are life threatening even despite receiving state of the art medical treatments. These research trials are often the only appropriate clinical option for patients with high-risk or treatment-refractory diseases to access lifesaving therapies. When funding is removed and trials are forced to stop, this translates meaningfully into patients with fatal disorders being unable to access lifesaving clinical trials.

3. Indirect costs are an inextricable component of research

The recent proposals to cut funding and limit coverage of indirect costs will have a detrimental impact on research labs and institutions' ability to perform biomedical research. If research grants will be narrowly limited to cover resources such as cost of chemicals and specimens only, but will cut the cost of electricity that powers the entire lab, there will be real life consequences of shutting down research programs around the country. This will result in losing years of progress and momentum towards biomedical discoveries and cures.

4. Economic impacts will be far reaching

There are well-established downstream financial impacts to both federal and state economies if NIH funding is cut. In FY 2023, every one dollar of NIH funding generated approximately \$2.46 of economic activity.¹ NIH is the largest single public funder of biomedical research *in the world* and in FY 2023, NIH funding generated an estimated \$92.89 billion in economic activity.² The significance of this economic impact cannot be overstated.

ASTCT remains steadfast in our mission to strongly advocate for policies that support bone marrow and cell transplantation and cellular therapy research and patient access to care. We continue to support efforts that drive science and bring potentially curative medical therapies to all patients in need. We will support and advocate for our members, our field and the

¹ <https://www.nih.gov/about-nih/what-we-do/impact-nih-research/serving-society/direct-economic-contributions>

² Ibid.



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patients who put their trust in us. As such, ASTCT remains willing to work with policymakers and stakeholders to safeguard critical funding and ensure that patients have access to the lifesaving therapies they need.

For the above stated, ASTCT again urges support for the NIH and any increased funding recommendations made by both the House and Senate appropriations committees. Thank you for your leadership and continued support of the biomedical field. It is our duty to ensure patient access to care and we appreciate your willingness to work with us in these challenging times.

If you have any questions, please contact Alycia Maloney, ASTCT's Director of Government Relations, at amaloney@astct.org.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "D. Porter".

David L. Porter, MD
President, ASTCT