March 20, 2026

Academy Policy & Legislative Update

Dear Academy friends,

On Tuesday, March 24, the Academy—together with fifteen imaging societies—will bring this message directly to Congressional offices in 19 states as part of the *Future of Health: Medical Imaging Research Hill Day*.. Click here to learn more.

**Dr. Bhattacharya Testifies in House Appropriations Oversight Hearing**

At a March 17 oversight hearing, bipartisan lawmakers urged NIH Director Jay Bhattacharya to more quickly spend the $48.7 billion budget; he said it will be fully used by September 30, 2026.

NIH is significantly behind on grants—awards are down 74% compared to recent years—due to delayed fund release, staffing cuts, and funding changes, though approvals have now moved forward.

Bhattacharya addressed concerns about early-career researchers, noting funding rates have dropped but arguing multi-year funding provides earlier support. He also said he is working to fill leadership gaps, with 16 institutes lacking permanent directors, and emphasized that funding and hiring decisions will remain nonpolitical.

To read more, click here.

**Register for Virtual Attendance**
**The Academy Research Roundtable Discussion** is scheduled for Wednesday, March 25, 2026 at AAAS Headquarters in DC, beginning at 8:00 am ET.

Virtual attendance is still available but requires advance registration. Register here.

This day-long research discussion convenes representatives from academia, industry, societies, investigators, and over 20 representatives from the following agencies: NIH, NIBIB, NCI, NHLBI, NIDDK, NIST, FDA, CMS, HHS, and ARPA-H. View the agenda here. More information about the Academy Roundtable is available here.

**UMR Releases Annual NIH Economic Impact Report**
United for Medical Research (UMR) today released the 2026 update of its annual analysis of the economic impact of National Institutes of Health (NIH) research funding. **The $36.58 billion awarded to researchers in the 50 U.S. states and the District of Columbia in FY2025 supported 390,863 jobs and generated $94.15 billion in new economic activity nationwide – producing $2.57 for every $1 invested.**

**Fewer Grants Awarded in FY2025**
Although total funding remained strong, FY2025 saw significant shifts in how awards were distributed. To meet its September 30 deadline following earlier delays, NIH made expanded use of multi-year funding – obligating the full value of certain grants upfront rather than distributing funding annually.
While this allowed NIH to spend its budget, it led to significantly fewer total grants awarded in FY2025:

- 5,564 fewer grants were funded compared to FY2024
- Success rates fell to approximately 17%, the lowest level in nearly 30 years and down from 26% the prior year
- 19 states and the District of Columbia experienced at least a 10% decline in number of awards

Read the announcement.
Read the report.

**MEDIA**

"NIH Research Grants Drove a $94 Billion National Economic Impact in 2025"

"NIH grant awards are again lagging far behind historical averages, analysis shows"

"'Brain drain' at NIH Sparks fears about the long-term impacts on public health"

**Academy "Funding, Facts, and Follow Up" Emails. Monthly updates and funding opportunities:** Click here to access an archive of the emails we send out, including our most recent.

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