NCI Director's Report

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National Cancer Advisory Board Meeting

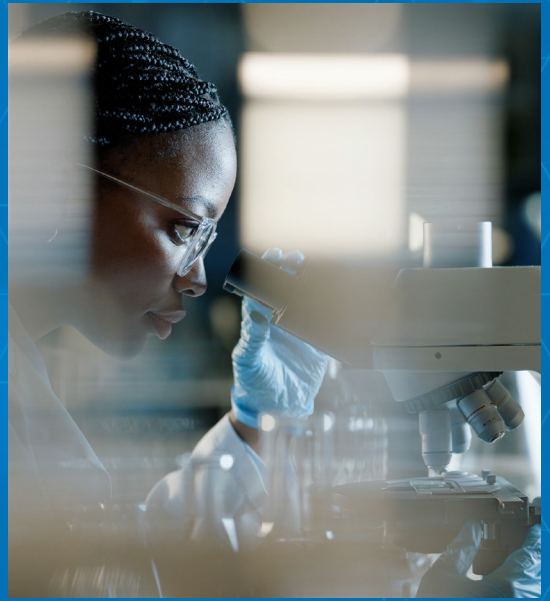
March 17, 2026

Today's Talk

- Stability and Competitiveness
- Research Updates
- NIH Unified Funding Strategy
- RPG Funding Trends

Stability

- Our mission remains clear and unchanged, and we will continue advancing it with the resources entrusted to us
- Despite perceptions, NCI remains on solid footing, with stable funding and continued momentum
- National Cancer Program is strong: FY25 marked record extramural support, and FY26 is positioned to fund even more grants



Competitiveness

- Global biomedical innovation is accelerating, US must remain a leader
- Many early phase trials going to Australia, China
- HHS-wide effort to improve this
- Solutions will have to go beyond HHS

Cancer Vaccines

Exciting results in hard-to-treat cancers, especially in preventing relapse. We need to test hypotheses faster:

- Clinical trials with clear go/no-go criteria
- Multiple parallel vaccine platforms
- NCI will commit funds and in kind
- FNIH taking lead in a public-private partnership
- More from Dr. Wu later

NIH NATIONAL CANCER INSTITUTE

FNIH
Foundation for the National Institutes of Health

Functional Precision Medicine

- Precision medicine using patients' tumor samples to directly assess drugs against tumor vulnerabilities
- Drive discovery and development of companion diagnostics
- Vision: resources accessible to researchers (intramural/extramural)
- Supported and guided by an expert panel including NCAB members

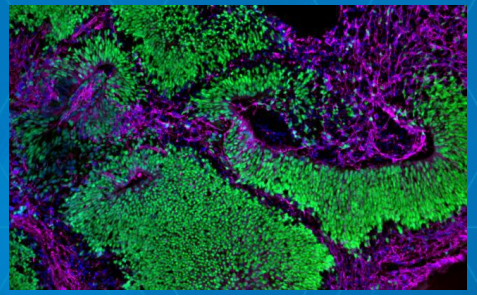
Animal Models

- NCI aligns with the NIH's 2025 initiative to reduce animal use in research
- Animal models have been foundational, and emerging human-based approaches are increasingly enhancing translational impact
- We support scientifically justified methods, prioritizing human-based approaches when possible and animal models when necessary

NIH Standardized Organoid Modeling Center

Standardizing Organoid Technology to Accelerate Clinical Translation

- Improve reproducibility and enable broader adoption in research and regulatory science
- Integrating AI/ML and automation to optimize organoid development and scale high-fidelity models
- Establishing a national resource to accelerate drug discovery, disease modeling, and patient-centered translational research



Brain organoid depicting neural stem cells (green) and neurons (magenta). Both cell types are abundant, showing normal development. [*NIAID*]

NIH Unified Funding Strategy



Funding Considerations

- Scientific peer review process remains central – expert review continues to guide assessments of scientific merit
- More awards will be made through select pay rather than a fixed payline
- Payout of grants in progress
- NCI Director approves all grants

Multi-Year Funding

- NCI is prepared to manage upfront or multi-year funding, not to exceed FY2025
- Uncertainty is a challenge
- Transition is a challenge
- Commitment to supporting a strong and predictable research environment remain unchanged: we anticipate funding more grants in FY26
- More detail from Weston Ricks later

RPG Funding Trends

Grant type	FY 2022 Number	FY 2022 Amount	FY 2023 Number	FY 2023 Amount	FY 2024 Number	FY 2024 Amount	FY 2025 Number	FY 2025 Amount
Non-Competing	3,899	$2,083,857	4,117	$2,212,260	4,316	$2,283,372	4,211	$2,534,946
Administrative Supplements	325	$33,311	354	$36,436	438	$47,330	346	$46,646
Competing	1,344	$656,673	1,352	$687,665	1,224	$640,639	964	$651,505
Total Research Project Grants	**5,243**	**$2,773,841**	**5,469**	**$2,936,361**	**5,540**	**$2,971,342**	**5,175**	**$3,233,097**





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