

Coalition Statement in Support of Research Using Human Fetal Tissue

June 2021

Our organizations represent scientific, medical, and patient communities dedicated to advancing medical knowledge and improving human health. We support the continued use of human fetal tissue (HFT) in research because it is an indispensable biomedical research tool crucial for life-saving biomedical research.

Research using HFT has led to numerous scientific and medical advances that have saved millions of lives, including the development of vaccines against polio, rubella, measles, chickenpox, adenovirus, and rabies, as well as treatments for debilitating diseases such as rheumatoid arthritis, cystic fibrosis, and hemophilia. Fetal tissue was also essential for the development of the first pre-exposure prophylaxis (PrEP) to prevent the transmission of HIV, and it remains critical for ongoing clinical research testing new therapies for Amyotrophic Lateral Sclerosis (ALS), spinal cord injury, and Parkinson's disease.

While some have argued that advances in recent years have reduced the need for HFT, it remains a critical resource for biomedical research. HFT has unique and valuable properties that often cannot be replaced by other cell types. Cells from HFT are more flexible and less specialized than cells from adult tissue and can be more readily grown in culture. This is part of the reason why HFT is used to generate vaccines and to study infectious diseases like Covid-19, Zika, HIV, and other viruses. HFT also remains necessary for ongoing research to understand human development and its impact on disease. It is needed to validate model systems to study the progression of diseases and evaluate new therapeutics. Finally, HFT is essential for validating alternative research approaches.

The longstanding oversight process for research using HFT ensures that it is scientifically meritorious, legal, and ethically sound. This ethical and legal framework requires robust informed consent for tissue donation and prohibits individuals from profiting from acquiring, receiving, or transferring fetal tissue for research.

The use of HFT in biomedical research remains crucial for ongoing biomedical research that could lead to the development of treatments that patients urgently need. As organizations representing scientists, clinicians, and patients driven by a desire to improve the health and well-being of all, we support the continued use of this vital resource.

Academic Pediatric Association
AIDS Action Baltimore
AIDS Alabama
AIDS Cure Research Collaborative
AIDS Foundation Chicago
AIDS Treatment Activists Coalition (ATAC)
Alliance for Aging Research
American Academy of HIV Medicine
American Academy of Neurology

American Academy of Pediatrics
American Association for the Advancement of Science
American Association of Colleges of Pharmacy
American Association of Immunologists
American Brain Coalition
American Institute of Biological Sciences
American Pediatric Society
American Physiological Society
American Society for Cell Biology
American Society for Reproductive Medicine (ASRM)
American Society of Hematology
American Society of Human Genetics
American Thoracic Society
Americans for Cures
Association of American Medical Colleges
Association of American Universities
Association of Independent Research Institutes
Association of Nurses in AIDS Care
Association of Public & Land-Grant Universities
AVAC
Axis Advocacy
BEAT-HIV Collaboratory
Coalition for the Life Sciences
Council on Governmental Relations
DARE MDC CAB
defeatHIV Community Advisory Board
Elizabeth Glaser Pediatric AIDS Foundation
Endocrine Society
Equity Forward
Federation of American Societies for Experimental Biology
Fred Hutchinson Cancer Research Center
GLMA: Health Professionals Advancing LGBTQ Equality
Global Healthy Living Foundation
Harvard University
HealthHIV
HIV Medicine Association
HIV+Aging Research Project-Palm Springs
Housing Works, Inc.
Infectious Diseases Society of America
International Society for Cell & Gene Therapy (ISCT)
International Society for Stem Cell Research
Jacobs Institute of Women's Health
Johns Hopkins University
Latino Commission on AIDS
Martin Delaney Collaboratory CAB
Massachusetts General Hospital

Medical College of Wisconsin
Medical Students for Choice
NASTAD
National Working Positive Coalition
New York University
NMAC
Northwestern University Feinberg School of Medicine
Prevention Access Campaign
Princeton
Projekt Information e.V.
Research!America
Rutgers Biomedical and Health Sciences
San Francisco AIDS Foundation
Society for Maternal-Fetal Medicine
Society for Pediatric Research
Society for Reproductive Investigation
Society of Family Planning
Society of Toxicology
Stanford University
State University of New York
Stony Brook University
Texans for Cures
The Michael J. Fox Foundation for Parkinson's Research
The New York Stem Cell Foundation
Treatment Action Group
Treatment Education Network (TEN)
TSC Alliance
UC San Francisco
UCLA
Union of Concerned Scientists
United States People Living with HIV Caucus
University of California San Diego
University of California System
University of California, Davis
University of California, Irvine
University of Chicago Medicine
University of Illinois College of Medicine
University of Massachusetts Medical School
University of Michigan
University of Oregon
University of Rochester
University of Washington
University of Wisconsin-Madison
Weill Cornell Medicine
West Virginia University
Yale University