

July 29, 2025

Dr. Jay Bhattacharya  
Director  
National Institutes of Health  
9000 Rockville Pike  
Bethesda, Maryland 20892

Dear Dr. Bhattacharya,

On behalf of the undersigned 40 organizations, representing the scientific community and biosafety and biosecurity stakeholders, we write to share our concerns regarding federal science agency implementation of the “Improving the Safety and Security of Biological Research” Executive Order 14292. We are alarmed by the recent suspension of dozens of grants under the EO, including research long recognized as essential to public health. These suspensions hamper our ability to develop treatments and diagnostics for infectious diseases, making the U.S. more vulnerable to infectious disease threats at a time when our public health challenges are more complex than ever before.

Researchers, institutions and governments recognize the need to manage biosafety and biosecurity risks. However, research currently covered by the gain-of-function pause is already subject to a high level of review and scrutiny to protect the public and the scientists conducting the work. NIH’s recent actions ignore this existing infrastructure and expertise, and in doing so, threaten to drive researchers out of scientific fields and further cede U.S. leadership in biomedical research and biosecurity. As one researcher shared in The Washington Post, “We live with the viruses every day. Nobody would want their staff or their students to get infected.”

Initial reports from NIH and USDA grantees confirm that the scope of agency actions under EO 14292 is far broader than intended and risks paralyzing critical areas of biomedical research. For example, stop work orders from NIH have included experiments that have been standard practice in tuberculosis research that has been conducted safely for over 40 years, halting the development of new drugs, diagnostics and treatments for tuberculosis.

Further, the handling of GOF research reflects a troubling lack of clarity and coordination within the federal government. Reports of internal disagreement among agencies and staff about how to interpret and apply EO 14292 only further underscore the confusion researchers are facing on the ground. This uncertainty has resulted in the abrupt and arbitrary halting of long standing, peer reviewed and biosafety approved research. It is clear the absence of consistent guidance continues creating unnecessary disruption across the U.S. research enterprise, further undermining U.S. leadership in science and public health preparedness.

Maintaining strong biosafety and biosecurity systems requires continued federal investment, not arbitrary research suspensions and indiscriminate funding cuts. We urge the Administration to commit to transparent, evidence-based policy making that safeguards public health, strengthens biosecurity, and supports continued scientific innovation. This includes robust funding to support state-of-the-art lab safety and training programs.

Thank you for your consideration of these requests. We welcome the opportunity to further discuss our concerns regarding the implementation of EO 14292. Please contact Amalia Corby, Director of Federal Affairs at the American Society for Microbiology at [acorby@asmusa.org](mailto:acorby@asmusa.org) to arrange a conversation.

Thank you,

American Society for Microbiology  
American Academy of Allergy, Asthma & Immunology  
American Association for Anatomy  
American Association of Immunologists  
American College of Neuropsychopharmacology  
American Institute of Biological Sciences  
American Pediatric Society (APS)  
American Society for Investigative Pathology  
American Society for Virology  
American Society of Tropical Medicine and Hygiene  
American Statistical Association  
American Thoracic Society  
Association of American Medical Colleges  
Association of Independent Research Institutes  
AVAC  
Biophysical Society  
Camenzind Solutions LLC  
Families Fighting Flu  
Foundation for Sarcoidosis Research  
Gerontological Society of America  
Global Health Technologies Coalition  
HIV Medicine Association  
IDSA  
International Bipolar Foundation  
Let's Talk UTI, Inc  
Marymount University  
National Foundation for Infectious Diseases  
North American Vascular Biology Organization  
Pediatric Infectious Diseases Society  
Peggy Lillis Foundation  
Penn State College of Medicine  
Society for Pediatric Research (SPR)  
Society of Toxicology  
Stony Brook University  
Stop TB USA  
TB Alliance  
Texas Biomedical Research Institute  
Texas Healthcare & Bioscience Institute  
Treatment Action Group

Veterans for Common Sense  
wAIHA Warriors

**For further reading:**

ASM Factsheet on Gain of Function Research. <https://asm.org/getmedia/ef3e09db-a3c3-4eff-8e73-5d7edbcabb47/asm-gain-of-function-factsheet-2025.pdf>