



STATE OF HAWAI'I
KA MOKU 'ĀINA O HAWAI'I

DEPARTMENT OF THE ATTORNEY GENERAL
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**ATTORNEY GENERAL LOPEZ SUES TRUMP ADMINISTRATION FOR
DEFUNDING MEDICAL AND PUBLIC HEALTH INNOVATION
RESEARCH**

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

February 10, 2025

HONOLULU – – Attorney General Anne Lopez and 21 other attorneys general today sued the Trump Administration, the Department of Health and Human Services, and the National Institutes of Health (NIH), in an effort to bar them from unlawfully cutting funds that support cutting-edge medical and public health research at universities and research institutions across the country.

On Friday, February 7, the NIH announced it would abruptly slash indirect cost rates to an across-the-board 15% rate, which is significantly less than the cost required to perform cutting edge medical research. The NIH purported to make this cut effective today (February 10), giving universities and institutions no time to plan for the enormous budget gaps they are now facing. Without immediate relief, this action could result in the suspension of lifesaving and life-extending clinical trials, disruption of research programs, layoffs, and laboratory closures.

The coalition is challenging the Trump Administration's attempt to unilaterally cut "indirect cost" reimbursements at every research institution throughout the country. These reimbursements cover expenses to facilitate biomedical research, like lab,

faculty, infrastructure and utility costs. Without them, the lifesaving and life-changing medical research in which the United States has long been a leader, could be compromised.

Indirect cost reimbursements are based on each institution's unique needs, negotiated with the federal government through a carefully regulated process, and then memorialized in an executed agreement.

"President Trump's total lack of compassion for all Americans knows no bounds. In just three weeks, he has cut programs providing healthcare and education, resources for climate change and clean air, and policies promoting diversity and equity. Now, he is making massive cuts to lifesaving medical research. Here in Hawai'i, the University of Hawai'i is supported by 175 awards and subawards from the NIH with a current value of \$211M. I joined this lawsuit with my fellow democratic attorneys general because we are the last line of defense to enforce the rule of law," said Attorney General Lopez.

The coalition also argues that this action to slash indirect costs violates the Administrative Procedure Act, including a directive Congress passed during President Trump's first term to fend off his earlier proposal to drastically cut research reimbursements. That statutory language, still in effect, prohibits the NIH from requiring categorial and indiscriminate changes to indirect cost reimbursements.

The NIH is the primary source of federal funding for medical research in the United States. Medical research funding by NIH grants have led to innumerable scientific breakthroughs, including the discovery of treatment for cancers of all types, the first sequencing of DNA and the development of the MRI. Additionally, dozens of NIH-supported scientists have earned Nobel Prizes for their groundbreaking scientific work.

Attorney General Lopez is joined by a coalition of attorneys general from Arizona, California, Connecticut, Colorado, Delaware, Illinois, Maine, Maryland, Massachusetts, Michigan, Minnesota, Nevada, New Jersey, New Mexico, New York, North Carolina, Oregon, Rhode Island, Vermont, Washington and Wisconsin.

The lawsuit was filed today in U.S. District Court for Massachusetts and can be found [here](#).

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