

2025 Rally for Medical Research – Grassroots Advocacy Toolkit

Table of Contents

FAQs	2
Suggested Timeline for Coordinated Action	3
Key Messages	3
Additional Background on FY 2026.....	5
Advocacy 101: How to Contact Congress	6
Sample Action Alert Email/Letter	8
Sample Action Alert Email/Letter	9
Sample X Posts	10
Sample Facebook Posts	11
#IRallyFor Selfie Campaign	11
Sample Text Messages	12
Sample Letter to the Editor	12
Sample Press Release	13

FAQs

What is the Rally for Medical Research Hill Day and who is participating?

The 13th Annual Rally for Medical Research Hill Day will be held on Thursday, September 18, 2025, in Washington, DC. More than [400 medical research advocacy organizations](#) will send patients, survivors, researchers, clinicians, and advocates from across the country to carry their voices directly to Congress. Together they will thank lawmakers for decades of bipartisan support and call for robust, sustained increases for the National Institutes of Health (NIH) in FY 2026.

The Rally is about reaffirming that medical research must remain a national priority and about showing what is possible when America commits to it. NIH-supported science has led to longer lives after cancer, breakthroughs in treating heart disease, new hope for people living with diabetes and Alzheimer's, and cutting-edge cures for rare genetic disorders. It has strengthened public health, fueled innovation, and delivered answers across every field of medicine. But progress is fragile. Without robust, sustained increases in funding, discoveries stall, opportunities are lost, and patients are left waiting.

The Rally belongs to everyone, not only those in DC. Advocates across the nation are encouraged to take part in a National Day of Action by calling or emailing their members of Congress, sharing their personal stories online, and using the tools at <https://rallyformedicalresearch.org>. Each story has power, showing the human impact of research and the hope it brings to patients and families. When voices from every state come together, the message is unmistakable: strong federal investment in NIH is essential to protect progress, accelerate discovery, and save lives.

What is the goal of the event?

The goal of the Rally for Medical Research Hill Day is to deliver a clear and unified message to Congress: investing in the National Institutes of Health (NIH) must remain a national priority. This investment drives lifesaving discoveries, strengthens communities and the economy, and ensures that America leads the world in medical progress. Most importantly, it offers patients and families the hope of better treatments, longer lives, and cures that are within reach.

What is the role of the grassroots networks?

Grassroots networks of patients, survivors, scientists, clinicians, students, and advocates are the force that turns the Rally into a national movement. Together they represent millions of Americans, and their collective voice has the power to send a clear, coordinated message that Congress cannot ignore.

On September 18, organizations across the medical research community will activate their networks in a National Day of Action. Advocates will be encouraged to email their congressional offices, post messages on social media tagging their members of Congress, and share their stories in local newspapers and op-eds. Each action adds momentum, showing that the call for strong NIH funding comes not just from Washington, but from every community across the country.

Suggested Timeline for Coordinated Action

- Today:** Share news of the National Day of Action with your network. Include links to online tools and tips at <https://rallyformedicalresearch.org>.
- Sept. 17:** Send a reminder encouraging your networks to take action the next day.
- Sept. 18:** Join the National Day of Action alongside the Rally for Medical Research Hill Day. Contact Congress, post on social media, and share why NIH matters to you.

Key Messages

A Bipartisan Legacy

For more than half a century, Republicans and Democrats have stood together to build the National Institutes of Health (NIH) into one of America's greatest bipartisan achievements and the world's premier biomedical research agency. NIH has transformed medicine, fueled breakthroughs across every field of health, strengthened national security, and secured America's position as the global leader in science and innovation. Its impact is measured not only in discoveries, but in lives saved, treatments delivered, and hope restored to patients and families.

The Public is United

Few issues bring Americans together so strongly. Seven in ten voters say Congress should make increasing medical research funding a top priority, and nearly nine in ten support

continued federal funding for NIH. **The message is clear: the American people want medical research to remain a national priority.**

With overwhelming public support behind it, Congress must now act to safeguard the future of medical research:

- **Secure Robust NIH Funding for FY2026.** We are grateful that leaders in both the House and Senate Appropriations Committees have reaffirmed their bipartisan commitment to medical research. To fully seize today's scientific opportunities and meet patient needs, more than 500 organizations recommend at least \$51.3 billion for NIH in FY2026. This level of investment will sustain momentum, accelerate clinical trials, and ensure lifesaving research continues without interruption.
- **Ensure Timely Release of FY2025 Funds.** In FY2025, NIH has obligated nearly \$8 billion less than Congress appropriated compared to the same point in time last year. Thousands of approved grants have been delayed or terminated, stalling trials and disrupting labs nationwide. Congress must ensure these funds are released without delay and prevent this breakdown from carrying into FY2026. Patients cannot afford to see lifesaving research trapped in bureaucratic limbo.
- **Strengthen America's Edge in Innovation.** Every dollar invested in NIH generates \$2.56 in economic activity, contributing nearly \$95 billion to the U.S. economy in FY2024 and supporting over 407,000 jobs across nearly every congressional district. Cutting back now would weaken America's economy, weaken our national security, and cede leadership in medical innovation.
- **Ensure taxpayer dollars support the best research.** Requiring grant review by political appointees risks undermining the foundational principles of freedom of inquiry and scientific merit that have long guided the success of American biomedical research. Importantly, it is contrary to the funding of the most scientifically meritorious grants, a principle that has resulted in American scientific excellence and world leadership.

We are living in the most scientifically promising moment in history. Diseases that once defined generations are becoming treatable, manageable, even curable. This is not a partisan choice. It is a bipartisan legacy that must not be abandoned. With one voice, we call on Congress to protect patients, protect progress, and secure the future of lifesaving research.

Additional Background on FY 2026

April 30, 2025 – Senate Appropriations Committee Hearing

The Senate held a bipartisan hearing titled “Biomedical Research: Keeping America’s Edge in Innovation.” Hearings are public sessions where lawmakers question witnesses (such as NIH and HHS leaders, scientists, and patient advocates) and signal their priorities. Senators in both parties underscored NIH’s importance, raised alarms about delays in FY 2025 funds, and questioned the administration’s approach to restructuring and cutting biomedical research.

May 2, 2025 – President Releases FY 2026 Budget Proposal for NIH

In May, the White House unveiled its budget plans for FY 2026, first through a preliminary “skinny budget” and then in a detailed request. Both proposed nearly \$18 billion in cuts to NIH—a reduction of almost 40 percent, shrinking the budget to roughly \$27.5 billion and consolidating 27 institutes into eight.

July 31, 2025 – Senate Appropriations Committee Passes FY2026 Funding for NIH

The Senate Appropriations Committee approved \$48.7 billion for NIH, a \$400 million increase over FY 2025, on a strong bipartisan vote. Senators from both parties praised NIH’s role in advancing medical breakthroughs, supporting jobs nationwide, and protecting U.S. leadership.

September 9, 2025 – House Appropriations Committee Passes FY2026 Funding for NIH

The House Appropriations Committee advanced its bill with \$46.9 billion for NIH, a \$99 million increase over FY 2025, in a 35–28 party-line vote. While NIH was reaffirmed as a bipartisan priority, debate underscored deep partisan divisions over cuts to other health and education programs.

What’s Next

Committee action is only the beginning. Each chamber must still pass its version of the bill, and then Congress will have to agree on a final funding level for NIH. The Senate bill moved forward with strong bipartisan support, while the House bill includes steep cuts to other health, education, and labor programs that are likely to spark partisan battles. Those fights could stall progress and push NIH funding decisions into a larger, year-end spending package. For advocates, the message is clear: NIH has strong bipartisan backing, but its future is not yet secure.

Advocacy 101: How to Contact Congress

You don't need to travel to Washington to make an impact. Every letter, email, and phone call from a constituent helps shape decisions in Congress. Lawmakers pay attention when the people they represent speak up, especially when the message is personal, respectful, and clear.

Step 1: Finding Your Lawmakers

The first step in advocacy is simple: identify who speaks for you in Congress. Knowing your lawmakers by name and reaching out directly is what turns broad support into personal action. This is how your voice connects to decisions in Washington.

- Visit <https://www.rallyformedicalresearch.org/TakeAction>
- Enter your home address and you will be matched directly with your Representative and Senators.
- From that page, you can immediately send an email, place a call, or write a letter using the tools provided.

Step 2: Build a Strong Message

A powerful message has three parts:

- Introduce yourself
 - “My name is [Name], and I live in [City/State].”
 - Always say you are a constituent. That matters most.
- Share your story
 - Why is medical research important to you or your family?
 - Keep it short, clear, and personal. Your connection is what makes your message unforgettable.
- Make the ask
 - “Please support at least \$51.3 billion for the NIH in FY2026 and ensure timely release of FY2025 funds.”
 - Connect the ask back to your story: “Families like mine are counting on continued medical progress.”

Step 3: Choose How to Act

- Email: Use the template provided as a guide, but add your own words. Staff notice when a message feels genuine.
- Phone call: Be polite and direct. A staff member will take notes on your call, and your message will be passed along.
- Letter: Handwritten or typed letters stand out. A personal note is often remembered and shared within an office.

Quick Do's and Don'ts

Do:

- Be proud to say you are a constituent.
- Keep your message short, clear, and respectful.
- Share a personal story – it's what gets remembered.
- Always thank the office for their time and support.

Don't:

- Overwhelm staff with a long essay.
- Use insider jargon or unexplained acronyms.
- Turn it into a partisan attack.
- Forget to make a specific ask.

Why It Matters

When you contact Congress, you make research personal. You remind lawmakers that behind every number in a budget is a patient, a family, and a future at stake.

Your message is part of a larger chorus that can shift outcomes in Washington. It protects progress already made, pushes forward the discoveries of tomorrow, and shows that the demand for medical research comes from every community in the nation.

Advocacy is how we turn hope into action. Each voice adds to the momentum that saves lives.

Sample Action Alert Email/Letter

Dear Senator/Representative [Last Name],

I appreciate the bipartisan commitment you and your colleagues have demonstrated by supporting strong funding for the National Institutes of Health (NIH). I urge you to continue this momentum by providing at least \$51.3 billion for NIH in FY 2026. Strong, reliable funding is essential to keep lifesaving research moving forward and to ensure patients and families benefit from the progress science makes possible.

[Optional Personal Story — Highly Recommended]

If you or someone you love has been directly impacted by NIH-supported research, please share your experience here. For example: “Thanks to an NIH-funded clinical trial, I had access to a new treatment that gave me precious time with my family.” Personal experiences make the strongest impression on Congress.

The impact of NIH funding is measured not only in discoveries, but in lives saved, treatments delivered, and hope restored to families. NIH-supported research has driven a 34% drop in cancer mortality since 1991 and cut deaths from heart disease in half since 1924. It also made breakthroughs like gene-editing therapies for sickle cell disease possible. These advances show what federal investment makes possible and what is at risk if funding falters.

NIH also strengthens America’s economy. Each year, NIH research generates nearly \$95 billion in economic activity and supports more than 407,000 jobs at over 2,500 institutions in every state. Every dollar invested returns more than double to local communities, fueling innovation, jobs, and competitiveness.

The American people are clear: nearly nine in ten voters support continued NIH funding, 77% oppose cuts, and a bipartisan majority want Congress to make medical progress a higher priority. Congress now has the chance to reflect that overwhelming support and secure NIH as a lasting national priority. On behalf of patients, survivors, researchers, and families nationwide, I respectfully ask you to champion robust NIH funding in FY 2026 and to ensure this bill is completed without delay.

Thank you for your leadership and commitment.

Sincerely,
[Your Name]

Sample Action Alert Email/Letter to a Member Who May Not Be Familiar with NIH

Dear Senator/Representative [Last Name],

As your constituent, I am writing to urge you to support at least \$51.3 billion for the National Institutes of Health (NIH) in FY 2026. The NIH is the world's premier medical research agency, advancing discoveries that save lives, strengthen families, and keep America at the forefront of science and innovation.

[Optional Personal Story — Highly Recommended]

If you or someone you love has been directly impacted by NIH-supported research, please share your experience here. For example: "Because of an NIH-funded clinical trial, my daughter received a treatment that allowed her to return to school and enjoy a normal childhood. For families like mine, NIH support means hope and more time together."

NIH saves lives. Cancer deaths have dropped 34% since 1991. Heart disease mortality has been cut in half. Breakthroughs like gene-editing are curing sickle cell disease and other conditions once thought untreatable. These advances are only possible because America has invested in research. When funding falls short, progress slows, and patients pay the price.

NIH fuels America's economy. Each year, it generates nearly \$95 billion in economic activity and supports more than 400,000 jobs in universities, hospitals, labs, and small businesses across all 50 states. Every dollar invested returns more than double to our communities, driving innovation, entrepreneurship, and local growth.

NIH also protects national security. It strengthens America's ability to respond to pandemics, bioterror threats, and emerging diseases. At the same time, it ensures that American science stays ahead of competitors like China. Robust investment in NIH keeps our people safe, our economy strong, and our nation secure.

The American people agree. Nearly nine in ten voters support continued NIH funding, and strong majorities in both parties oppose cuts. This is a bipartisan legacy worth protecting and a national priority we cannot afford to ignore.

On behalf of patients, caregivers, researchers, and families across the country, I respectfully urge you to support robust NIH funding in FY 2026 and to help ensure this bill is completed

without delay. I hope you will keep the health of families and the strength of our nation in mind as you make these decisions.

Sincerely,
[Your Name]

Sample X Posts

On X, please use the hashtags #RallyMedRes and #FundNIH. Every post helps amplify our message, show the strength of this movement, and catch the attention of policymakers when they see themselves tagged. Together, we can make clear that medical research must remain a national priority.

Download a corresponding social graphic:

<https://aacr.ent.box.com/v/25RallyMedRes/file/1907142922962>

Below are sample posts to consider:

- Dear [@CongressMember], please invest in the @NIH — it saves lives, drives progress, and strengthens our nation. RallyForMedicalResearch.org #RallyMedRes #FundNIH
- Research means hope! Join the 13th Annual #RallyMedRes from anywhere in the US by participating in the National Day of Action at Rallyformedicalresearch.org
- Thanks [@CongressMember] for your commitment to medical research! Grateful to have your support for @NIH funding. #RallyMedRes #FundNIH
- #NIH research is the basis for countless treatments, therapies, and cures. Sustained, predictable funding growth ensures that we can continue to provide hope for millions of patients battling life-threatening and chronic conditions. #RallyMedRes #FundNIH
- Today's science could lead to a breakthrough treatment for a chronic or life-threatening condition that affects millions. To deliver on that promise we need sustained, predictable funding for @NIH. #RallyMedRes #FundNIH

Sample Facebook Posts

We encourage you to post to your own Facebook pages and to the pages of members of Congress. When adding a link to your post, please delete the URL's text from the post once Facebook automatically adds a link preview.

- I am someone/I have a loved one who is affected by [Disease or Condition]. That's why federal support of medical research is so important to me. Congress should invest in the NIH for the health and economic security of our nation, so join me and @[Organization Facebook Profile] in taking action today.
<https://rallyformedicalresearch.org>
- Research funded by the NIH is the cornerstone of new advances against the toughest diseases we face, and it fuels jobs and economic growth across the United States. Tell Congress: Medical research should be a top priority.
<https://rallyformedicalresearch.org>
- Medical research is important to me because [*Personal Reason*]. That's why I'm joining the @[Organization Facebook Profile] to rally for medical research and urge Congress invest in the NIH! Add your voice at the link below!
<https://rallyformedicalresearch.org>

#IRallyFor Selfie Campaign

Participants in the Rally Hill Day as well as those participating in the Day of Action are encouraged to post a selfie to social media platforms (particularly Facebook and X) that reads “#IRallyfor _____” to promote their personal connection to the Rally for Medical Research. [Click here](#) to download and print your own #IRallyFor sign!

Sample Text Messages

If your organization has the capability to send text alerts to your network of advocates, you may wish to use a message similar to these:

- Tell Congress that medical research should be a national priority. It only takes a minute! <https://rallyformedicalresearch.org>
- Let your member of Congress know that medical research is important to you! Reach out to them here: <https://rallyformedicalresearch.org> [you may wish to insert the link to your own engagement page instead]

Sample Letter to the Editor¹

[DATE]

To the Editor:

First way to start the letter: I want to thank Representative [Last Name] and/or Senator(s) [Last Name] for their continued and strong support for medical research funding.

A second way to start the letter: As Congress continues to work on many challenging issues, I urge Representative [Last Name] and Senator(s) [Last Name] to support robust funding growth for the National Institutes of Health (NIH).

Body of the text: NIH research funding is an investment in our country's future. The funds are used to support the development of treatments and cures for a wide range of diseases and conditions. In addition, it supports talented scientists in every state—including this one—who every day are working to discover critical medical breakthroughs.

Insert: Personal story

Robust, sustained, and predictable funding for NIH is critical if the agency is to continue to serve as the world's preeminent medical research institution and our best hope for finding cures, improving treatments, and gaining a better understanding of the complex causes of diseases that affect millions of people nationwide. The agency supports research that is too

¹ Adapted from a sample Letter to the Editor created by the Coalition for the Life Sciences and available at www.coalitionforlifesciences.org

expensive and risky for private industry to undertake alone but has led to major advancements in our understanding of rare diseases and disorders, as well as historically prevalent diseases like Alzheimer's, cancer, and Parkinson's.

I will be watching for our congressional delegation's leadership on this issue.

Sample Press Release

For Immediate Release

For media inquiries, contact [Name] at [Email] or [Phone].

[Fill in organization here] Joins Rally for Medical Research Hill Day to Advocate for NIH Funding

Annual event brings more than 400 organizations together to improve health, inspire hope, and save lives

[City, State]— [Fill in organization here] will be one of more than 350 organizations participating in the twelfth annual [Rally for Medical Research Hill Day](#) in Washington, D.C. on September 18 in support of robust, sustained, and predictable annual funding increases for the National Institutes of Health (NIH).

Hill Day participants will urge members of Congress to continue their steadfast support for NIH by providing the agency the highest possible increase to the NIH base budget in fiscal year (FY) 2026. The medical research community has recommended at least \$51.3 billion for the NIH's base program level for FY 20256.

[Organization's expert/leadership quote]

On September 17, the Rally for Medical Research reception will feature remarks from NIH leaders and congressional champions of medical research.

On September 18, more than 400 scientists, health professionals, and patient advocates from nearly every state will meet with House and Senate members and their staff to emphasize the importance and impact of investing in NIH:

- 95% of the NIH budget goes directly to research awards, programs, and centers; training programs; and research and development contracts.
- Each year, NIH awards more than 60,000 research and training grants. These grants support approximately 300,000 researchers at more than 2,500 universities and organizations in every state.
- NIH-funded research contributed to 354 of 356 new drugs approved by the U.S. Food and Drug Administration between 2010 and 2019.
- In FY 2024, research funded by NIH supported more than 407,000 jobs and more than \$94 billion in economic activity across the U.S.

In conjunction with the Hill Day, advocates across the country will participate in the Rally National Day of Action. Partner organizations will encourage their communities to contact their members of Congress via phone, email, and social media to urge their support for the highest possible appropriation increase for NIH in FY 2026.

The Rally for Medical Research initiative was launched in April 2013 to bring together the entire medical research community to urge Congress to make NIH funding a national priority. Through the annual Hill Day, the Rally for Medical Research continues to raise awareness about the critical need for continued investment in NIH to improve health, spur progress, inspire hope, and save lives.

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Follow the Rally on X: [@RallyforNIH](#), [#RallyMedRes](#), and [#FundNIH](#)

[\[Organization's boilerplate\]](#)