Defunding mRNA Research Endangers U.S. Health, Leadership, and Safety

Experts Highlight Concerns with Cuts to mRNA Technology Investment

Partnership to Fight Infectious Disease

Messenger RNA (mRNA) therapeutics and vaccines are one of the most significant breakthroughs in modern immunology and have the potential to change multiple fields of medicine. Instead of using inactivated or weakened whole-virus or viral particles, mRNA delivers targeted instructions that prompt our cells' protein-making machinery to produce a harmless viral protein.

Multiple studies have shown that both the mRNA and the harmless viral protein produced by the cells are quickly cleared by the body and do not accumulate after stimulating an immune response. This process safely and effectively trains the immune system to recognize and fight the real pathogen without exposing the body to the live or inactivated-whole virus, which take far longer to update in the case of a pandemic or emerging threat.

mRNA platforms also hold extraordinary potential to tackle a wide range of health issues, from emerging infectious diseases to cancers and other serious conditions.

All of this progress is now at risk. The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services recently moved to terminate nearly $500 million in contracts supporting mRNA vaccine development – leading to warnings from experts in medicine, science, national security, and public health. Their message is clear:

CUTS TO mRNA RESEARCH PUTS AMERICANS AT RISK.

"It is unfortunate that [HHS] just canceled a half a billion worth of work, wasting the money which is already invested. [It] has also conceded to China an important technology needed to combat cancer and infectious disease. President Trump wants to Make America Healthy Again and Make America Great Again. This works against both of President Trump's goals."

U.S. Senator Bill Cassidy (R-LA)

"The data about mRNA accines was mischaracterized. These are not damaging vaccines. These are life-saving vaccines."

Adm. Brett Giroir, former assistant secretary for health (2018-21)

"This idea again helps us develop vaccines and new treatments for everything from cancer, melanoma – which my wife has – HIV, to better flu vaccines and Zika. These are advances that are not going to happen now. People are going to die because we're cutting short funding for this technology."

Jerome Adams, 20th U.S. Surgeon General (2017-21)

Defunding mRNA Research Endangers U.S. Health, Leadership, and Safety

Partnership to Fight Infectious Disease

"These tools serve as a deterrent to prevent other nations from using certain biological agents. The speed of the technology to create new biodefense capabilities is a national security asset."

Chris Meekins, HHS deputy assistant secretary for preparedness and response (2017-19)

"Vaccines using mRNA technology helped save countless lives during the pandemic. We urge the Administration to continue vital research to improve mRNA vaccines, not throw the baby out with the bathwater by effectively preventing research from moving forward."

Bobby Mukkamala, president of the American Medical Association

"Even if cancer is not the target, it may have an impact on applications of this technology to cancer, as we have relied heavily on lessons from infectious disease vaccination to develop immunotherapies."

Mike Milone, cancer researcher at the University of Pennsylvania

"This may be the most dangerous public health judgment that I've seen in my 50 years in this business. It is baseless, and we will pay a tremendous price in terms of illnesses and deaths. I'm extremely worried about it."

Dr. Michael Osterholm, director for the Center for Infectious Disease Research and Policy at the University of Minnesota

"This is a profoundly disappointing development. When there's the next pandemic, we're going to be caught flat-footed. It absolutely leaves the country vulnerable."

Dr. Jennifer B Nuzzo, director of the Brown University School of Public's Pandemic Center

Continued federal investment in mRNA technologies is critical to keep America healthy, defend against future health threats, and accelerate breakthroughs against deadly diseases.

VISIT FIGHTINFECTIOUSDISEASE.ORG TO LEARN MORE.