



Council

Carol L. Beck

President
Thomas Jefferson University

Randy Hall

President-Elect
Emory University School of Medicine

Namandjé N. Bumpus

Past President

Pamela Hornby

Secretary/Treasurer
Drexel University College of Medicine

John Traynor

Secretary/Treasurer-Elect
University of Michigan

Xinxin Ding

Past Secretary/Treasurer
University of Arizona College of Pharmacy

Amy Arnold

Councilor
Pennsylvania State University
College of Medicine

Nina Isoherranen

Councilor
University of Washington

Daniela Salvemini

Councilor
Saint Louis University

Kenneth Tew

Chair, Publications Committee
Medical University of South Carolina

Jerry Madukwe

FASEB Board Representative
Cell Press

Carol Paronis

Chair, Program Committee
McLean Hospital

Ashim Malhotra

Chair, IDEA Committee
California Northstate University
College of Pharmacy

Saranya Radhakrishnan

Chair, Young Scientists Committee
National Institute of Mental Health

David Jackson

Executive Officer

March 5, 2025

The Hon. Bill Cassidy
Chair
Senate Committee on Health,
Education, Labor & Pensions
U.S. Senate
Washington, DC 20510

The Hon. Bernie Sanders
Vice Chair
Senate Committee on Health,
Education, Labor & Pensions
U.S. Senate
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Chair Cassidy and Vice Chair Sanders,

On behalf of the members of the American Society for Pharmacology and Experimental Therapeutics (ASPET), we respectfully submit the following questions to the Committee for nomination of Dr. Jayanta Bhattacharya, to serve as the Director of the National Institutes of Health.

ASPET is a 4,000-member scientific society whose members conduct basic and clinical pharmacological research and work in academia, government, industry, and non-profit organizations. ASPET members conduct research leading to the development of new medicines and therapeutic agents to fight existing and emerging diseases. ASPET is a global pharmacology community that advances the science of drugs and therapeutics to accelerate the discovery of cures for disease.

ASPET normally does not comment on NIH nominees, beyond the need to fill the role, however Dr. Bhattacharya's record raises questions upon which we feel the Committee should investigate further. The NIH is the leader in biomedical research and its director should be as accomplished as their predecessors and be as strong an advocate for biomedical research and the entire scientific enterprise. This enterprise not only includes the lab, but a substantial portion of the U.S. economy.

As such, we submit the following questions for consideration:

- What are you going to do to support the research that has been targeted for drastic cuts under the current Administration?
- How are you going to ensure that NIH can support federally funded research, research security and research compliance with recent and proposed layoffs at the agency?

Transforming Discoveries into Therapies

ASPET · 1801 Rockville Pike, Suite 210 · Rockville, MD 20852 · Office: 301-634-7060 · aspet.org



- Given the continuous and potential drastic cuts to federal research funding, how do you plan to safeguard NIH's ability to drive scientific innovation, maintain global leadership in biomedical research and facilitate continued progress in disease areas such as cancer, Alzheimer's, infectious disease, and rare disease?
- High risk research cannot be completed without basic science; how will you balance these priorities?
- NIH has fostered for over 50 years a collaborative model with the public on deciding policies, grants, and other issues impacting science. How will you implement the revision to the policy related to public notice and comment at NIH?
- When can we expect to see study sections meeting again? How do you think interruptions in science funding are affecting the integrity of labs, scientific trainees and the interest of the next generation's interest in pursuing careers in biomedical research?
- Recent statements to Senators saying, "[you] want to ensure the NIH is funding research that scientists can verify by reproducing the work and investing more in high-risk, high-reward-studies," this presents a dichotomy, as reproducibility is what science has been doing for years, while the high-stakes, high-rewards research is the focus of ARPA-H which is now targeted for defunding and is currently director less, how will you reach your goal under these circumstances?
- Currently the administration has imposed a Facilities and Administration rate cap to 15% impacting over \$5.5 billion in the local economies. The return on investment (ROI) on NIH funding is for every \$1 in funding, \$2.46 is generated for the economy. What are your plans to address this impact?
- Do you believe that scientific and biomedical research that NIH conducts and funds to be imperative to United States national security? Do you see any attempts to reduce funding for basic science and biomedical research as endangering the United States national security?
- Do you believe it is important that the United States remains a world leader in basic biomedical research on the global stage?
- What is your view on the relationship between NIH funding and the ability of the agency to carry out its mission?
- Should you be confirmed, what steps would you take to strengthen the NIH workforce and attract needed talent to fulfill the agency's mission, as well as promote a culture of innovation?

ASPET respectfully submits that the entirety of the questions be entered into the official record of the March 5, 2025 hearing considering the nomination of Dr. Jayanta Bhattacharya, to serve as the Director of the National Institutes of Health. We look forward to working with the Senate Committee on Health, Education, Labor & Pensions to address any questions that you may have regarding our questions.