



Progress Report

April 2025 - June 2026

National Institutes of Health



Agency Pledge

April 2025 - NIH pledged to prioritize *“human-relevant”* models and reduce animal testing across all intramural and extramural research.

7/7/25

NOFO announcement

NIH announced it will no longer issue funding opportunities exclusively for animal models. Notices of Funding Opportunity (NOFOs) related to animal model systems are required to also support human-focused methods.

7/7/25

FDA-NIH Workshop

NIH co-hosted a workshop with the FDA focused on reducing animal testing. Agency leadership committed to transparency, urging public reporting of spending on animal models and reinforcing policies that prioritize animal-free methods.

7/24/25

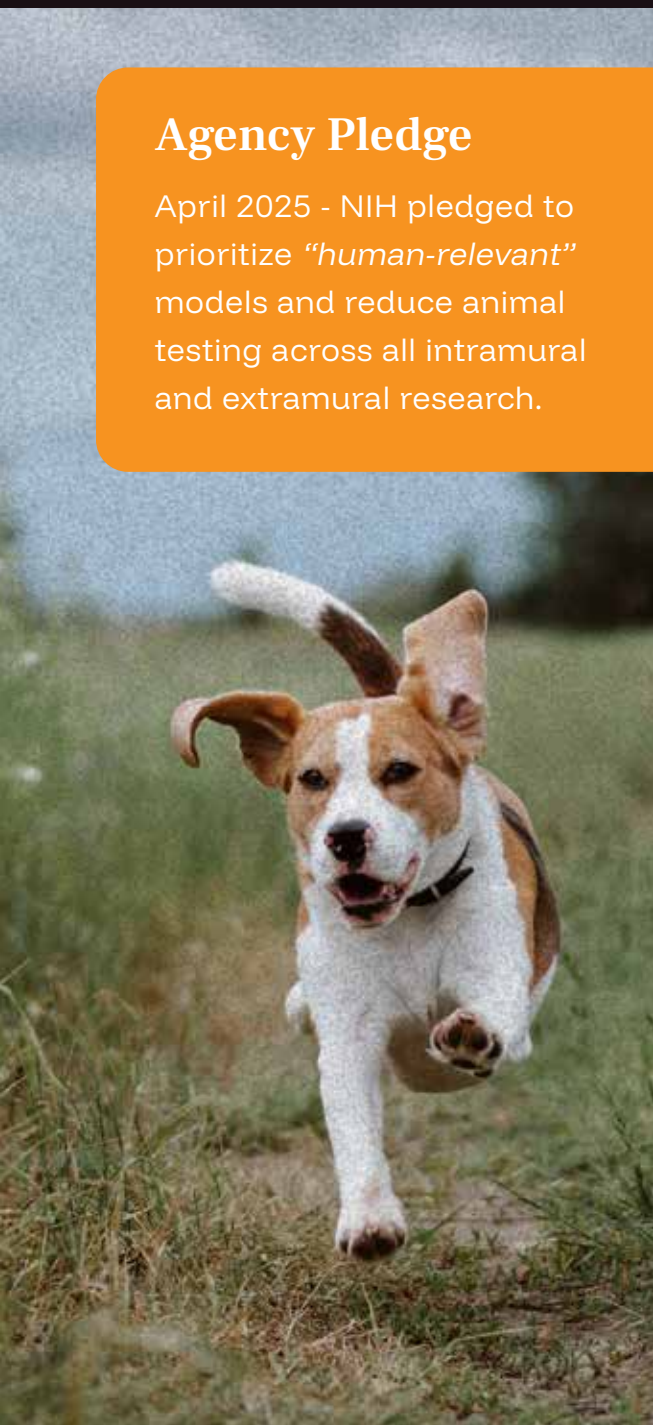
Validation and Qualification Network (VQN)

The Foundation for NIH (FNIH) announced the creation of the VQN, a public-private partnership to advance and standardize non-animal methods. The partnership consists of over 40 government agencies and life science, nonprofit, and regulatory organizations.

Summer 2025

Tackling animal-methods bias

The agency began training grant reviewers to evaluate human-based approaches without defaulting to animal data. This will help overcome an animal-methods bias that has long plagued the advancement of non-animal models.



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Summer 2025

CAMERA Database

The Collection of Alternative Methods for Regulatory Application (CAMERA) Database was created to provide a center hub of validated alternative methods for safety and efficacy testing.

Summer 2025

FAQs updated

The NIH released FAQs to help applicants navigate the new funding policy and justify the use of animal or non-animal approaches based on scientific merit.

9/9/25

MAHA report highlights NAMs

The Make America Healthy Again (MAHA) strategy report, *Make our Children Healthy Again*, emphasizes use of New Approach Methods (NAMs), stating, "This improves prevention, diagnosis, and personalized treatment strategies while reducing reliance on animal studies that often fail to replicate complex human conditions."

9/25/25

Launch of SOM Center

\$87 million was allocated to create the Standardized Organoid Modeling (SOM) Center, the nation's first dedicated organoid development center to reduce animal research.

9/25/25

Some animal-testing grants canceled

CBSNews reports that "The Trump administration has canceled nearly \$28 million of federal grants for animal testing as major federal health agencies are phasing out research on live animals in favor of new alternatives"



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9/30/25

Reduction to Practice Prize

The NIH Common Fund and NASA's Tournament Lab launched the Reduction to Practice prize, a competition seeking teams to demonstrate practical, integrated human-based NAMs within three years.

January 2026

ORIP Strategic Plan

The Office of Research Infrastructure Programs (ORIP) released their strategic plan for 2026-2030. Priority #1 of the plan focuses on continued investment in animal models of human disease and the "need to ensure national availability of nonhuman primate (NHP) resources."

12/20/25

HHS Secretary Targets Monkey Use

The Secretary of Health and Human Services indicated federal interest in ending research monkey imports, investing in monkey sanctuaries, and ending the use of monkeys in testing.

February 2026

Launch of VQN Pilot Projects

The VQN announced its pilot projects focusing on improving preterm birth risk prediction using human-relevant biomarkers, modeling developmental neurotoxicity with lab-grown human brain systems, studying inhalation toxicity using lung models that closely replicate human tissue, and using computational tools to predict acute oral toxicity and better understand how chemicals affect the body.

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2/9/26

From Research Center to Sanctuary?

The Oregon Health & Science University board of directors voted to enter into discussions with the NIH about the possibility of transitioning the Oregon National Primate Research Center (ONPRC) to a primate sanctuary.

5/4/26

Guidance on Selecting NAMs

NIH published new guidance encouraging researchers to select the most scientifically appropriate research model based on human relevance and translational value rather than historical use. The guidance emphasizes that animal models should not be used by default and encourages researchers to justify their model selection using the best scientific evidence.

3/18/26

Complement-ARIE Awards

NIH announced more than \$150 million to develop and scale research methods that better simulate human biology and reduce reliance on animal models. The funding marks the first awards under the Complement Animal Research in Experimentation (Complement-ARIE) program, an initiative to develop, implement, and standardize non-animal methods.



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Mid June 2026

NIH-ORIP Workshop

The NIH Office of Research Infrastructure Programs (ORIP) hosted the workshop “Advancing Research Infrastructure to Study Human Diseases” to examine how biomedical research can integrate traditional animal models with NAMs, including in vitro, in silico, and other human-relevant methods. While the workshop discussed expanding non-animal approaches, it primarily emphasized continued investment in animal models.

6/15/26

Launch of ORIVA

The Office of Research Innovation, Validation, and Application (ORIVA) will coordinate NIH-wide efforts to develop, validate and scale NAMs, including 3D human tissue models, computational tools and other animal-free methods that better reflect human biology.

Where NIH Progress Falls Short

- The January 2026 ORIP strategic plan’s emphasis on continued investment in animal models, coupled with Congress’s appropriation of \$30 million for infrastructure improvements at National Primate Research Centers, indicates internal resistance to transitioning away from animal research and raises concerns that parts of NIH may maintain or expand animal-based infrastructure in anticipation of future policy shifts favoring traditional animal models..
- No clear timeline, budget shifts, or lab closures have been announced.
- There have been no tracking or transparency updates to measure progress.
- The NIH has continued to approve dog studies post-pledge, drawing criticism.

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How NAVS is Helping the NIH Fulfill its Pledge

- NAVS submitted comments on NIH's Strategic Plan for FY2027–2031, urging the agency to prioritize human-relevant science throughout its research, funding, and operational priorities. The comments called for increased investment in NAMs, greater transparency and accountability, and funding decisions based on human relevance, predictive value, and translational success rather than historical reliance on animal models.
- NAVS supported NIH's proposal to establish new offices focused on validation, reproducibility, and regulatory translation of non-animal methods. These structural changes are critical to replacing animal research at scale.
- Upon learning of the pending vote by the Oregon Health & Science University board of directors to enter into discussions with the National Institutes of Health about the possibility of transitioning the Oregon National Primate Research Center (ONPRC) to a primate sanctuary, NAVS rallied supporters to contact the board and urge support for the transition. We also sent a letter of support signed by our science advisory committee members in support of the decision that was ultimately made.
- NAVS' Director of Science, Lauren Stein, serves on the FNIH VQN Steering Committee, guiding the selection of pilot projects with the highest potential to replace animals in key research areas and advancing the validation of new approach methodologies.
- NAVS has long fought against federal investments in nonhuman primate research infrastructure—including the recent \$30 million appropriation—urging NIH and Congress to redirect funding toward human-relevant, non-animal technologies.
- We support the Animal Research for the Animal Research Accountability Act (H.R. 3295), to increase transparency and track progress made toward NIH's pledge to reduce animal testing.
- We support the Cease for the Cease Animal Research Grants Overseas (CARGO) Act would end taxpayer funding for animal experiments performed abroad.
- Through funding of IFER, we are helping create a pipeline of early-career scientists who are experts in the non-animal technology of the future.
- As a Special Awards Judge at the International Science and Engineering Fair, NAVS presented five young scientists with awards to continue work on animal-free research methods.