

UPDATE



neurosurgery

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Neurosurgery Urges Collaboration on NIH Indirect Cost Policy

Washington, DC— Today, the American Association of Neurological Surgeons (AANS), the Congress of Neurological Surgeons (CNS), and over 40 other leading medical organizations [sent a joint letter](#) to the National Institutes of Health (NIH), expressing concerns over the agency’s new policy imposing a 15% cap on indirect cost rates for all NIH grants. The letter highlights the potential impact of this change on the long-term sustainability of the U.S. biomedical research enterprise and underscores the importance of working together to find a balanced solution.

The [Supplemental Guidance to the 2024 NIH Grants Policy Statement: Indirect Cost Rates](#) raises important questions about research infrastructure and funding stability, particularly for institutions that rely on NIH support to advance medical innovation, especially for life-threatening conditions. For decades, the federal government has sought to operate a standardized, structured, and transparent funding model to ensure compliance and accountability. The organizations signing the letter are calling for a collaborative dialogue to ensure that any changes to NIH’s indirect cost policy work toward improving these long-standing principles.

“NIH-funded research has been the cornerstone of U.S. leadership in biomedical science, driving bold discoveries that improve patient care,” said Alexander A. Khalessi, MD, MBA, chair of the AANS/CNS Washington Committee and lead coauthor of the letter. “Advancing treatments for stroke, cancer, spinal cord injury, epilepsy, and dementia depends on a strong research ecosystem. A 15% cap on indirect cost rate undermines the foundation that sustains these innovations. We respectfully urge NIH to reconsider this approach and work collaboratively on a solution that ensures transparency, efficiency, and long-term sustainability. Tomorrow’s patients depend on our collective success.”

If implemented, this policy will have far-reaching and unintended consequences, disrupting research operations, increasing financial strain on institutions, adding administrative burdens, and slowing medical innovation. The policy also threatens the infrastructure that supports clinical trials, regulatory compliance, and emerging scientific discoveries. Without a sustainable funding model, research institutions may be forced to scale back programs, reduce training opportunities, and shift focus away from high-risk, high-reward science. The letter urges NIH to work collaboratively with stakeholders to ensure a balanced approach that supports research excellence while maintaining fiscal responsibility.

Joining the AANS and CNS include Presidents of other medical organizations including:

- American Academy of Allergy, Asthma & Immunology
- American Academy of Dermatology Association
- American Academy of Emergency Medicine
- American Academy of Hospice and Palliative Medicine
- American Academy of Physical Medicine and Rehabilitation
- American Association of Neuromuscular & Electrodiagnostic Medicine

- American Association of Orthopaedic Surgeons
- American College of Allergy, Asthma and Immunology
- American College of Chest Physicians
- American College of Emergency Physicians
- American College of Gastroenterology
- American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists
- American College of Osteopathic Family Physicians
- American College of Osteopathic Internists
- American College of Rheumatology
- American Gastroenterological Association
- American Medical Association
- American Psychiatric Association
- American Society for Gastrointestinal Endoscopy
- American Society for Surgery of the Hand Professional Organization
- American Society of Anesthesiologists
- American Society of Dermatopathology
- American Society of Nuclear Cardiology
- American Society of Pediatric Nephrology
- American Society of Pediatric Neurosurgeons
- American Society of Plastic Surgeons
- American Society of Transplant Surgeons
- American Urogynecologic Society
- Association for Clinical Oncology
- Association of Academic Physiatrists
- Association of Department of Family Medicine
- Association of Women in Rheumatology
- College of American Pathologists
- Heart Failure Society of America
- Infectious Diseases Society of America
- North American Neuromodulation Society
- North American Primary Care Research Group
- North American Society for Pediatric Gastroenterology, Hepatology and Nutrition
- North American Spine Society
- Post-Acute and Long-Term Care Medical Association
- Society for Cardiovascular Angiography and Interventions
- Society of Gynecologic Oncology
- Society of Neurological Surgeons
- Society of Teachers of Family Medicine
- Society of Thoracic Surgeons

To read the letter, [click here](#).

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The American Association of Neurological Surgeons (AANS), founded in 1931, and the Congress of Neurological Surgeons (CNS), founded in 1951, are the two largest scientific and educational associations for neurosurgical professionals in the world. These groups represent over 10,000 neurosurgeons worldwide. Neurological surgery is the medical specialty concerned with the prevention, diagnosis, treatment, and rehabilitation of disorders that affect the entire nervous system, including the spinal column, spinal cord, brain, and peripheral nerves. For more information, please visit www.aans.org, www.cns.org, and www.neurosurgery.org.