

July 11, 2019

The Honorable Alex Azar
Secretary
U.S. Department of Health and Human Services
200 Independence Avenue, S.W.
Washington, D.C. 20201

Dear Secretary Azar:

We write to express our collective and strong opposition to the new policies on research using human fetal tissue announced by the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) on June 5, 2019. These policies would impose substantial barriers to and limit the use of an essential biomedical research resource that has led to many advances in human health and remains critical for the development of new treatments for a wide range of serious diseases.

Decades of thoughtful deliberation on fetal tissue research has provided an ethical and regulatory

Fetal tissue research cannot be replaced

While there have been some advances in recent years that have reduced the need for

Given these requirements in addition to two levels of peer review to assess the scientific and technical merit of any proposal, its potential significance, and the approach to the research, among other factors convening yet another review panel would be redundant and will delay medical research that could lead to new treatments. We are deeply concerned that additional delays resulting from the new policies will also lead scientists to abandon promising ideas that otherwise will go unexplored in the U.S. s efforts to seek other biomedical resources to minimize the use of fetal tissue, since any new options would need to be evaluated against the gold standard fetal tissue.

As organizations representing scientists, clinicians, and patients who are driven by a desire to improve the health and well-being of all, we share your interest in promoting the highest ethical standards in federally supported research. However, we are concerned that these new policies will undermine critical work to alleviate human suffering from disease and disability. As you continue to evaluate the regulations and rules for research using fetal tissue, we urge you to consider the scientific and medical significance of fetal tissue research and the rigorous ethical framework already in place.

Thank you for considering our views. Nearly everyone is a patient or future patient; we devastating diseases. Now is not the time to stifle progress.

Sincerely,

AIDS Action Baltimore
AIDS Foundation of Chicago
AIDS Treatment Activists Coalition
Alliance for Aging Research
American Academy of HIV Medicine
American Academy of Neurology
American Academy of Pediatrics
American Association for the Advancement of Science
American Association of Anatomy
American Association of Colleges of Pharmacy
American Institute of Biological Sciences
American Physiological Society
American Society for Investigative Pathology
American Society for Reproductive Medicine
American Society of Hematology
American Society of Human Genetics
American Thoracic Society
Americans for Cures
Associated Medical Schools of New York
Association for Research in Vision and Ophthalmology
Association of American Medical Colleges

Association of American Universities

