

Biomedical research policy needed for therapies, economic growth, education and security

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Bold and coordinated leadership at the federal level is essential to create secure, long-term, sustainable biomedical research funding policies based on strategic priorities, say the authors of a commentary about America's fledgling biomedical research framework published in this week's *Journal of the American Medical Association*.

In "A New Research and Development Policy Framework for the Biomedical Research Enterprise," by Howard J. Federoff, MD, PhD, of Georgetown University Medical Center and Elaine R. Rubin, PhD, of Association of Academic Health Centers, the authors lament the erosion of biomedical research [funding](#) and call for a strong focused direction moving forward, as presidential leadership has "waxed and waned" in past years.

"Biomedical research is integral to almost every realm of government responsibility—from protecting health and security to promoting [economic growth](#) and global competitiveness," they write.

In the commentary, Federoff and Rubin suggest guidelines for a new funding model that aligns the biomedical research enterprise with national needs -- bringing together government, academia and industry to build on strict principles, and that the outcomes of funding be "measurable and address training, scientific consequences, technology creation, and [economic benefit](#)."

The authors support their case for a new framework saying the "The United States' position as the dominant investor in a range of research and development programs is declining," and they warn that the US "... could fall behind in the biomedical sciences as international capabilities and markets change and countries make new [investment choices](#)."

"The United States has no national agency or research and development planning mechanism and no separately-identified research and development budget," say the authors who point out that the today's biomedical research enterprise is built on "a shifting foundation of policy making, which limits planning and operational effectiveness." Federoff and Rubin say the current funding system has not evolved to keep pace with science.

An unchanged policy in biomedical research can lead to "further slowing of already unacceptable rates of translatable discoveries into patient treatments and cures; declining economic growth; loss of a critical research workforce and talent diverted from biomedical scientific careers; diminished innovation and technological advances; reduced creation of intellectual property; a weakened higher education system; and new threats to national security," Federoff and Rubin argue.

"A new funding model is essential to create secure, long-term, sustainable funding based on strategic priorities," they add. It requires an academic-government-industry-foundation research partnership. This new policy framework "would advance the nation's health and economic well-being by ensuring that academic health centers can harness the full potential of the biomedical research enterprise to keep the [United States](#) healthy and competitive."

Provided by Georgetown University Medical Center

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