

Federal center hopes to spur drug research

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(AP) -- Federal officials concerned about the slowing pace of new drugs coming out of the pharmaceutical industry have decided to start a billion-dollar government drug development center to help create medicines.

The New York Times reported on its website Saturday about the new effort that comes as many large drug makers, unable to find enough new drugs, are trimming back research.

Promising discoveries in illnesses like [depression](#) and Parkinson's that once would have led to [clinical trials](#) are instead going unexplored because companies are not inclined and do not have the money to undertake the effort.

The paper reports that initial financing of the government's new drug center is relatively small compared with the \$45.8 billion that the industry estimates it invested in research in 2009. The cost of bringing a single drug to market can exceed \$1 billion, according to some estimates.

The drug industry's research productivity has been declining for 15 years and shows few signs of reversing that trend, said Dr. Francis S. Collins, director of the National Institutes of Health.

The new center, to be called the National Center for Advancing Translational Sciences, will do as much [research](#) as it needs to so that it can attract drug company investment.

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