

118TH CONGRESS
1ST SESSION

S. 2345

To amend the Public Health Service Act to authorize the Director of the National Institutes of Health to make awards to outstanding scientists, including physician-scientists, to support researchers focusing on pediatric research, including basic, clinical, translational, or pediatric pharmacological research, and for other purposes.

IN THE SENATE OF THE UNITED STATES

JULY 18, 2023

Ms. ERNST (for herself and Mr. COONS) introduced the following bill; which was read twice and referred to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions

A BILL

To amend the Public Health Service Act to authorize the Director of the National Institutes of Health to make awards to outstanding scientists, including physician-scientists, to support researchers focusing on pediatric research, including basic, clinical, translational, or pediatric pharmacological research, and for other purposes.

1 *Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representa-*
2 *tives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,*

3 **SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.**

4 This Act may be cited as the “Pediatricians Accel-
5 erate Childhood Therapies Act of 2023”.

1 **SEC. 2. TRANS-NIH AWARDS FOR EARLY-CAREER PEDI-**
2 **ATRIC RESEARCHERS.**

3 Part G of title IV of the Public Health Service Act
4 (42 U.S.C. 288 et seq.) is amended by adding at the end
5 the following new section:

6 **“SEC. 489A. TRANS-NIH AWARDS FOR EARLY-CAREER PEDI-**
7 **ATRIC RESEARCHERS.**

8 “(a) IN GENERAL.—The Director of the NIH shall
9 make awards to public and nonprofit entities to support
10 outstanding scientists, including physician-scientists, to
11 support early-career researchers focusing on pediatric re-
12 search, including basic, clinical, translational, or pediatric
13 pharmacological research.

14 “(b) PRIORITY RESEARCH POPULATIONS.—In car-
15 rying out subsection (a), the Director of NIH may
16 prioritize the issuance of awards to—

17 “(1) individual researchers at institutions de-
18 scribed in subsection (a) presenting qualifying appli-
19 cations and representing populations that have been
20 historically underrepresented in pediatric medical re-
21 search, including women and underrepresented racial
22 minorities; or

23 “(2) institutions of higher education that are el-
24 igible to receive funds under part A or B of title III
25 of the Higher Education Act of 1965, part A or B
26 of title V of such Act, or subpart 4 of part A of title

1 VII of such Act, or research institutions partnering
2 with such institutions of higher education to offer
3 programs to support early-career pediatric research-
4 ers.

5 “(c) PRIORITY RESEARCH TOPIC AREAS.—In car-
6 rying out subsection (a), the Director of NIH, in consulta-
7 tion with the Director of the Eunice Kennedy Shriver Na-
8 tional Institute of Child Health and Human Development
9 and the directors of other national research institutes and
10 national centers that participate within the NIH Pediatric
11 Research Consortium, shall—

12 “(1) establish priority research topic areas, in-
13 formed by external stakeholders, including research
14 institutions, professional societies, patient advocacy
15 organizations, and the private sector; and

16 “(2) consider opportunities to align such pri-
17 ority pediatric research topic areas with current and
18 future priorities of the National Institutes of Health,
19 including—

20 “(A) pediatric and adolescent mental and
21 behavioral health, including addiction medicine;

22 “(B) childhood cancer;

23 “(C) precision medicine, genetics, and
24 genomics;

1 “(D) rare diseases and disorders, such as
2 sickle cell disease, and other diseases and dis-
3 orders with significant unmet training needs;
4 and

5 “(E) fetal, placental, and neonatal develop-
6 ment.

7 “(d) REQUIREMENTS.—The Director of NIH—

8 “(1) shall require recipients of awards under
9 this section to use such awards to support pediatric
10 research activities, including costs associated with
11 laboratory staff and other costs associated with the
12 conduct of research; and

13 “(2) may allow recipients of awards under this
14 section to use such awards for costs associated with
15 receiving guidance and training from senior re-
16 searchers and mentors, as necessary to help such re-
17 cipients reach a state of research independence, in-
18 cluding conferences and other meeting participation.

19 “(e) SUPPLEMENT, NOT SUPPLANT.—Awards made
20 under this section shall be used to supplement, and not
21 supplant, other funding for pediatric research and pedi-
22 atric training.”.

1 **SEC. 3. NIH PEDIATRIC RESEARCH CONSORTIUM.**

2 Title IV of the Public Health Service is amended by
3 inserting after section 409D (42 U.S.C. 284h) the fol-
4 lowing new section:

5 **“SEC. 409D–1. NIH PEDIATRIC RESEARCH CONSORTIUM.**

6 “(a) ESTABLISHMENT.—The Director of NIH shall
7 establish and maintain a consortium to be known as the
8 NIH Pediatric Research Consortium (in this sections re-
9 ferred to as the ‘Consortium’) to coordinate pediatric re-
10 search programs across the National Institutes of Health.

11 “(b) MEMBERSHIP.—The members of the Consor-
12 tium shall consist of representatives of multiple national
13 research institutes and national centers.

14 “(c) CHAIR.—The Chair of the Consortium shall be
15 the Director of the Eunice Kennedy Shriver National In-
16 stitute of Child Health and Human Development (or the
17 Director’s designee).

18 “(d) DUTIES.—In coordinating pediatric research
19 programs across the National Institutes of Health, the
20 Consortium shall—

21 “(1) establish new or confirm existing National
22 Institutes of Health pediatric research priorities, in-
23 cluding priorities involving multiple national re-
24 search institutes or national centers;

1 “(2) identify gaps and opportunities for re-
2 search collaborations involving multiple national re-
3 search institutes and national centers; and

4 “(3) identify opportunities to develop the next
5 generation of pediatric researchers.

6 “(e) CONSULTATION.—The Consortium shall consult
7 regularly with external experts in the field of pediatric re-
8 search, including children’s hospitals, children’s research
9 institutions, patient organizations, and other stakeholders.

10 “(f) REPORTING.—Beginning one year after the date
11 of enactment of the Pediatricians Accelerate Childhood
12 Therapies Act of 2023 and every 2 years thereafter, the
13 Consortium shall submit to Congress, and make publicly
14 available on the website of the National Institutes of
15 Health, a report on—

16 “(1) any research project involving pediatrics
17 and involving more than one national research insti-
18 tute or national center that was supported during
19 the review period;

20 “(2) any strategic initiatives that include pro-
21 posed research activities focused on pediatrics;

22 “(3) career development awards supporting
23 early-career researchers focused in pediatrics, includ-
24 ing specific numbers of awards and amount of fund-
25 ing, made during the review period;

1 “(4) details on the composition of awards sup-
2 porting early-career researchers, including
3 deidentified, aggregate demographic data indicating
4 the proportion of early-career researchers supported
5 by the awards who are from populations that have
6 been underrepresented in pediatric medical research;
7 and
8 “(5) such other information as the Director of
9 NIH determines appropriate.”.

○