

Committee on Energy and Commerce

**Opening Statement as Prepared for Delivery
of
Full Committee Ranking Member Frank Pallone, Jr.**

***Hearing on "Maintaining America's Leadership in Biomedical Innovation: FDA's Role in
Advancing U.S. Drug Development"***

July 15, 2026

I am pleased that we are here to talk about advancing the United States' role in drug development, particularly at a time when that role is threatened by the actions of the Trump Administration.

For a long time, the United States has been the world leader in drug development. But this did not just happen. It was thanks to the collaboration between our public health agencies, namely the Food and Drug Administration and the National Institutes of Health, and industry partners to ensure our gold standard research and regulatory review process is appropriately tailored to bring safe and effective products to Americans.

Other countries have looked to our public health agencies as the gold standard leaders in research, therapeutic innovation, and development and regulatory oversight of medical product assessment. In order to remain that global leader, we need to preserve the strength of our public health infrastructure and investment in research. However, we have heard many experts sound the alarm that the United States is at risk of losing its competitive edge in research and development to other countries, especially China.

Unfortunately, actions we have seen from the Trump Administration will only fuel the fire in allowing other countries to overtake our position – threatening the advancement of lifesaving cures.

The Trump Administration has slashed billions of dollars in critical research funding. This funding was already congressionally approved, but Trump wasted no time in abruptly and arbitrarily cutting the funding from research institutions and dismantling federal scientific agencies. Experts warn that these funding cuts destabilized the scientific research that is the foundation of drug discovery. In many instances, these funds were slated to go toward scientific research that would develop basic research that complements industry's applied research for drugs that they submit to FDA for approval. Without this initial public investment into NIH, the pipeline of drugs will slow. In fact, the Congressional Budget Office estimated that a 10 percent cut to NIH's budget would result in 20 fewer lifesaving drugs approved over 10 years.

But the Administration's threats to advancing drug development do not end there – early last year, the Elon Musk-led DOGE indiscriminately and illegally cut thousands of federal employees from our public health institutions. It is still unclear which positions or programs were cut in the mass layoffs. I have asked FDA specifically for this information for over a year

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and still have not received satisfactory responses. And just yesterday, I asked the Government Accountability Office whether FDA has violated the law in spending user fee dollars on unauthorized expenditures. As we approach the user fee reauthorizations next year, I expect answers to those questions.

Beyond these terminations, the Administration has created upheaval at the FDA. Despite attempts to rehire staff, reports have shown that the FDA applicant pools are not as robust as they used to be. This is concerning given reports of “brain drain,” with leading scientists leaving the United States to work for competing countries.

So, I am glad we are having this hearing today, but we cannot have a productive conversation about how best to move forward without honestly evaluating the real harm this Administration has done. The Administration’s actions threaten availability of new cures for American patients.

I look forward to hearing from our witnesses about what else is needed to address this critical problem as we begin the process of reauthorizing user fees. Thank you. I yield back.