

HHS Doubles AI-Backed Childhood Cancer Research Funding

Funding for the Childhood Cancer Data Initiative rises from \$50 million to \$100 million to analyze and help cure pediatric cancers.

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The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services announced [on September 30] a doubling of funding for its Childhood Cancer Data Initiative at the National Cancer Institute. The funding surge is designed to accelerate the development of improved diagnostics, treatments, and prevention strategies.

President Trump in 2019 established the Childhood Cancer Data Initiative to collect, generate, and analyze childhood cancer data. Its budget will rise from \$50 million to \$100 million, giving the federal government stronger data for this effort. The initiative will also bring in private-sector partners to apply advanced artificial intelligence to speed up cures for pediatric cancer.

Health and Human Services Secretary Robert F. Kennedy Jr., National Institutes of Health Director Jay Bhattacharya, and National Cancer Institute Director Anthony Letai joined President Trump at the White House today to discuss their commitment to eradicating childhood cancer and to mark the signing of the president's executive order, Unlocking Cures for Pediatric Cancer with Artificial Intelligence.

"For too long, families have fought childhood cancer while our systems lagged behind," said Secretary Kennedy. "President Trump is changing that. We will harness American innovation in artificial intelligence to find cures for pediatric cancer."

"We are dedicated to using every innovative method and technology at our disposal in our fight against childhood cancer," said NIH Director Jay Bhattacharya, MD, PhD. "By doubling down on this mission with AI, we are ensuring that state-of-the-art science is being leveraged to provide answers about these diseases that would otherwise be out of reach."

"Our efforts have helped us learn from every child and better understand childhood cancer, reduce its risk, develop better treatments, and improve survivorship for children, teens and young adults with cancer," said NCI Director Anthony Letai, MD, PhD, who was sworn in on Sept. 29, 2025. "I cannot think of a better way to begin my tenure at NCI than to redouble our efforts to support our youngest patients and their families facing rare leukemias and other cancers. We will not stop until

childhood cancer is a thing of the past.”

The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) will use artificial intelligence to maximize the potential for electronic health record and claims data to inform research and clinical trial design. Parents will remain in control of their child’s health information as the data is used to benefit patients and researchers.

The president’s Make American Healthy Again (MAHA) Commission [Strategy Report](#) directs HHS to “focus on research that harnesses AI to uncover causes, identify risks early, and take action in childhood and young adulthood to prevent cancer.” Pediatric cancer remains the leading cause of disease-related death for children in the United States, and its incidence has increased by more than 40 percent since 1975.

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