

# ASHG

American Society of Human Genetics

## ADVOCATE UPDATE

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February 2025

### ASHG Calendar: Events and Important Dates

- Have you taken part in our recent advocacy campaigns to voice concern over the decisions to [cap facilities and administration payments](#) included in NIH grants and the directive ordering a [temporary pause in federal funding](#)? If not, use the links to join the effort today!
- Support the next generation of scientists by volunteering as a judge for the [ASHG 2025 DNA Day Essay Contest](#)! You'll play a key role in selecting outstanding student voices while contributing to a long-standing ASHG program. [Sign up today](#) and help inspire the future of human genetics!
- Applications for the 2025-2026 [Advocacy Certificate for Human Genetics and Genomics Trainees \(ACGT\) program](#) will open on **March 12, 2025**. Help us spread the word to human genetics and genomics trainees interested in advocacy. It's a great way to build professional skillsets, network with other members, and participate in special ASHG events and opportunities!
- Interested in **cancer genetics and genomics**? This is the topic of our virtual [Spring Symposium](#) on **April 8-9, 2025**. [View the program and register today](#) for this digital-only event and hear talks about recent developments in cancer genetics and genomics.

### Take Action: Advocate Against Cuts to NIH-Supported Research Funding!



The recent abrupt change in NIH's Facilities and Administration (F&A) cost policy will have a significant impact on the scientific community. ASHG issued a [statement](#) expressing deep concern that this policy would severely limit essential resources for the biomedical research ecosystem. Check out this helpful resource from the Coalition for the Life Sciences: [What Scientists Need to Know About Facilities and Administrative Costs](#) and tell your members of Congress how cuts to NIH research infrastructure will harm your institution and [the economy](#).

You can also contact your House Representative or Senators by phone by calling the Capitol Switchboard. Simply call this number, **(202) 224-3121**, give the operator your zip code, and they will connect you with your elected officials' office.

Take Action Now!

### ASHG Responds to Federal Health Agency Layoffs



Starting on February 13, the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) laid off thousands of probationary workers from the NIH, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), and the Food and Drug Administration (FDA), among other agencies. It is estimated that at least 3,600 federal workers lost their jobs. ASHG is deeply troubled by these layoffs and believes that the impact of these sudden layoffs on scientific progress and innovation in the United States is "profound and alarming." You can read ASHG's full statement [here](#).

### ASHG Hosts an Educational Webinar for Congressional Staffers

As the 119th Congress begins, ASHG remains committed to keeping human genetics and genomics a key priority for policymakers. We welcomed new and returning members of



Congress on their swear-in day, January 3, 2025, strengthening relationships and sharing with them the impact that human genetics and genomics research has [in their state](#). On February 26, we hosted a webinar for health staffers to provide a foundational understanding of genetics and its role in public policy. Speakers discussed genetic fundamentals, emerging technologies, and the policy and economic implications, highlighting the importance of evidence-based policymaking in this rapidly evolving field.

## In Other Policy News

- Research!America recently sent a [community letter](#) urging Congress to robustly fund the NIH and prevent an abrupt change to reimbursement of Facilities and Administrative costs. ASHG joined a remarkable 524 organizations and over 3,000 private citizens who endorsed the letter.
- The appropriations process for Fiscal Year (FY) 2025 is still ongoing. Chairman Tom Cole (R-OK) released a [statement](#) saying that "Funding the federal government is a constitutional obligation and bipartisan priority. We continue to work to move topline discussions and cooperation forward." The current FY2025 continuing resolution (CR) will expire on [March 14, 2025](#).
- The House Labor, Health and Human Services, Education, and Related Agencies Appropriations Subcommittee, with jurisdiction over NIH funding, [announced](#) a Public Witness Hearing on April 9 to discuss fiscal year (FY) 2026 appropriations. Requests to testify and/or provide written testimony for the record are due by March 21 and April 9, respectively.
- Earlier this month, leaders at the American Association for the Advancement of Science (AAAS) Annual Meeting met to discuss the meeting theme, "Science Shaping Tomorrow," and discussed ways in which the scientific enterprise can "bolster itself amid the uncertainty." You can read more about discussions from this meeting [here](#).
- Robert F. Kennedy Jr. was [sworn in](#) earlier this month as the 26th Secretary of the HHS after a [52-48 confirmation](#) in the Senate. Stanford professor Jay Bhattacharya, MD, PhD, who has been tapped to become the next director of NIH, has yet to be scheduled for his confirmation hearing with the Senate Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions (HELP).
- In case you missed it, you can [watch the recording](#) of ELSI Hub's most recent ELSI Friday Forum seminar, "Building Infrastructures to Enhance Community Engagement Work." Don't miss the [next ELSI Friday Forum](#) on March 14 at 12pm ET, "Enhancing Genetic Screening Access through Community Partnerships in the Cleveland African American Prostate Cancer Project."

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