



DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH & HUMAN SERVICES

Public Health Service

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February 9, 2026

Latanya Morrison
Founder & Executive Director
Ahmad Butler Foundation
1500 Chestnut Street, Suite 2593
Philadelphia, Pennsylvania
19102

Dear Ms. Morrison:

Thank you for your letter to Dr. Anthony Letai, Director of the National Cancer Institute (NCI), with an enclosed formal Declaration of Pediatric Cancer as a National Emergency, on behalf of the Ahmad Butler Foundation and the families you represent. NCI, a component of the National Institutes of Health (NIH), is the Government's principal agency for cancer research. The Institute recognizes the concerns outlined in the declaration and the experiences of families affected by pediatric cancer.

NCI is deeply committed to discovering innovative ways to cure as many children with cancer as possible, and to do so in a manner that causes the least long-term side effects for survivors. We believe that real progress has been made in pediatric cancer research, but we know there is so much work that remains to be done on behalf of children.

NCI receives its budget from the United States Congress, and this funding supports research in laboratories and medical centers throughout the U.S., as well as research at the NCI headquarters in Bethesda, Maryland, including within NCI's Pediatric Oncology Branch at the NIH Clinical Center. You can learn more about NCI's work in childhood cancer research, including a discussion of the challenges and opportunities in this field, with the enclosed *Research on Childhood Cancers* page from NCI's website.

NCI does not decide in advance what percentage of funding will go to any specific type of cancer (like pediatric cancer). Instead, NCI's goal is to provide funding for the best ideas. Every year, experts (who do not work at NCI) review research applications sent to NCI. These experts judge the applications on their scientific strength and chances of success. This process, called peer review, helps determine what research projects get funding from NCI.

Additionally, support for basic science (approximately half of the NIH/NCI budget) and other

cross-cutting cancer research investments (e.g., studying the immune system and cancer to advance immunotherapy approaches across cancer types, or studying molecular changes that drive cancer development and progression across different types of cancers) have led to significant advances for children with cancer. Almost all progress against cancer in children, teenagers, and adults has come from basic research. Basic research into cancer is not specific to any cancer types, or to adults or children, but rather seeks to understand the fundamental biological mechanisms underpinning cancer.

Thank you for taking the time to share this important perspective and for your dedication to advancing the well-being of children and families affected by cancer.

Sincerely yours,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Nancy Siebert Murphy". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, prominent initial 'N'.

Nancy Siebert Murphy
National Cancer Institute
National Institutes of Health

Enclosure