Science Advancement & Outreach
A DIVISION OF PETA

1536 16th St. N.W., Washington, DC 20036

March 18, 2026

Dear Clinical Trials & Translational Research Advisory Committee members:

On behalf of Science Advancement and Outreach, the biomedical science policy division of People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals, we request that the Clinical Trials and Translational Research Advisory Committee (CTAC) advise the National Cancer Institute (NCI) to prioritize translational cancer research that focuses exclusively on non-animal methods, and to end the conduct and funding of research that uses other animals. As CTAC evaluates the effectiveness of NCI's translational research enterprise and identifies opportunities with the greatest clinical value, prioritizing human-based approaches offers an important opportunity to improve the predictive value and clinical relevance of NCI-funded research.

Despite over 50 years of significant investment in cancer therapy research, the success rate for oncology drugs remains below 10%[1] and cancer continues to be the second leading cause of death in the U.S.[2,3] A key explanation for this high failure rate is the continued conduct of and investment in cancer research and drug testing that uses animals. Genetic, molecular, immunological, and cellular differences between humans and other animals prevent experiments on animals from accurately identifying effective cancer therapies for humans.[4] In addition, the methods used to create animal models of cancer—particularly xenografted and genetically engineered animals—fail to replicate the sporadic, heterogeneous nature of human tumors, producing results that do not translate to cancer patients.[5]

Human-based methods are offering powerful, translationally meaningful insights—often using a patient's own cancer cells—in a physiologically relevant environment.[6] 3D human tissue models are being used to test potential cancer therapeutics,[7,8,9,10,11] predict treatment response,[12,13,14] identify biomarkers,[15,16] and study the tumor microenvironment.[17,18,19,20] Additionally, cancer genomics[21,22,23] and machine-learning tools[24,25,26,27,28,29] are transforming diagnosis and enabling real-time predictions of therapeutic response.

These recommendations and others are expanded on in our policy roadmap, Research Modernization NOW, including an appendix relevant to Cancer on page 25.

By encouraging NCI to prioritize human-relevant research approaches, CTAC can align with NIH's Unified Strategy, which includes developing, validating, and scaling human biology-based, non-animal methods, and help strengthen the clinical value and efficiency of the translational cancer research pipeline.

Thank you for considering these recommendations.

Sincerely,

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