

117TH CONGRESS
1ST SESSION

S. 1357

To amend the Public Health Service Act to authorize the Director of the National Institutes of Health to make awards to outstanding scientists, including physician-scientists, to support researchers focusing on pediatric research, including basic, clinical, translational, or pediatric pharmacological research, and for other purposes.

IN THE SENATE OF THE UNITED STATES

APRIL 22, 2021

Ms. ERNST (for herself, Mr. COONS, Mr. CASEY, Mrs. HYDE-SMITH, Mr. WICKER, and Mr. BENNET) introduced the following bill; which was read twice and referred to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions

A BILL

To amend the Public Health Service Act to authorize the Director of the National Institutes of Health to make awards to outstanding scientists, including physician-scientists, to support researchers focusing on pediatric research, including basic, clinical, translational, or pediatric pharmacological research, and for other purposes.

1 *Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representa-*
2 *tives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,*

1 **SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.**

2 This Act may be cited as the “Pediatricians Accel-
3 erate Childhood Therapies Act of 2021” or the “PACT
4 Act of 2021”.

5 **SEC. 2. TRANS-NIH AWARDS FOR EARLY-CAREER PEDI-**
6 **ATRIC RESEARCHERS.**

7 Part G of title IV of the Public Health Service Act
8 (42 U.S.C. 288 et seq.) is amended by adding at the end
9 the following new section:

10 **“SEC. 489A. TRANS-NIH AWARDS FOR EARLY-CAREER PEDI-**
11 **ATRIC RESEARCHERS.**

12 “(a) IN GENERAL.—The Director of the NIH shall
13 make awards to outstanding scientists, including physi-
14 cian-scientists, to support early-career researchers focus-
15 ing on pediatric research, including basic, clinical,
16 translational, or pediatric pharmacological research.

17 “(b) PRIORITY RESEARCH POPULATIONS.—In car-
18 rying out subsection (a), the Director of NIH may
19 prioritize the issuance of awards to applicants who—

20 “(1) are individual researchers presenting quali-
21 fying applications and representing populations that
22 have been historically underrepresented in pediatric
23 medical research, including women and underrep-
24 resented racial minorities; or

25 “(2) are institutions of higher education that
26 are eligible to receive funds under part A or B of

1 title III of the Higher Education Act of 1965, part
 2 A or B of title V of such Act, or subpart 4 of part
 3 A of title VII of such Act, or research institutions
 4 partnering with such institutions of higher education
 5 to offer programs to support early-career pediatric
 6 researchers.

7 “(c) PRIORITY RESEARCH TOPIC AREAS.—In car-
 8 rying out subsection (a), the Director of NIH, in consulta-
 9 tion with the Director of the Eunice Kennedy Shriver Na-
 10 tional Institute of Child Health and Human Development
 11 and the directors of other national research institutes and
 12 national centers that participate within the Trans-NIH
 13 Pediatric Research Consortium, shall—

14 “(1) establish priority research topic areas, in-
 15 formed by external stakeholders, including research
 16 institutions, research societies, patient organizations,
 17 and industry; and

18 “(2) consider opportunities to align such pri-
 19 ority pediatric research topic areas with current and
 20 future priorities of the National Institutes of Health,
 21 including—

22 “(A) pediatric and adolescent mental and
 23 behavioral health, including addiction medicine;

24 “(B) childhood cancer;

1 “(C) precision medicine, genetics, and
2 genomics;

3 “(D) rare diseases and disorders, such as
4 sickle cell disease, and other diseases and dis-
5 orders with significant unmet training needs;
6 and

7 “(E) fetal, placental, and neonatal develop-
8 ment.

9 “(d) REQUIREMENTS.—The Director of NIH—

10 “(1) shall require recipients of awards under
11 this section to use such awards to support pediatric
12 research activities, including costs associated with
13 laboratory staff and other costs associated with the
14 conduct of research; and

15 “(2) may allow recipients of awards under this
16 section to use such awards for costs associated with
17 receiving guidance and training from senior re-
18 searchers and mentors, as necessary to help such re-
19 cipients reach a state of research independence, in-
20 cluding conferences and other meeting participation.

21 “(e) SUPPLEMENT, NOT SUPPLANT.—Awards made
22 under this section shall be used to supplement, and not
23 supplant, other funding for pediatric research and career
24 development awards.”.

1 **SEC. 3. TRANS-NIH PEDIATRIC CONSORTIUM.**

2 Title IV of the Public Health Service is amended by
3 inserting after section 409D (42 U.S.C. 284h) the fol-
4 lowing new section:

5 **“SEC. 409D–1. TRANS-NIH PEDIATRIC CONSORTIUM.**

6 “(a) ESTABLISHMENT.—The Director of NIH shall
7 establish and maintain a consortium to be known as the
8 Trans-NIH Pediatric Research Consortium (in this sec-
9 tions referred to as the ‘Consortium’) to coordinate pedi-
10 atric research programs across the National Institutes of
11 Health.

12 “(b) MEMBERSHIP.—The members of the Consor-
13 tium shall consist of representatives of multiple national
14 research institutes and national centers.

15 “(c) CHAIR.—The Chair of the Consortium shall be
16 the Director of the Eunice Kennedy Shriver National In-
17 stitute of Child Health and Human Development (or the
18 Director’s designee).

19 “(d) DUTIES.—In coordinating pediatric research
20 programs across the National Institutes of Health, the
21 Consortium shall—

22 “(1) establish pediatric research priorities;

23 “(2) identify gaps and opportunities for re-
24 search collaborations involving multiple national re-
25 search institutes and national centers; and

1 “(3) identify opportunities to develop the next
2 generation of pediatric researchers.

3 “(e) CONSULTATION.—The Consortium shall consult
4 regularly with external experts in the field of pediatric re-
5 search, including children’s hospitals, children’s research
6 institutions, patient organizations, and other stakeholders.

7 “(f) REPORTING.—Beginning one year after the date
8 of enactment of the Pediatricians Accelerate Childhood
9 Therapies Act of 2021 and every 2 years thereafter, the
10 Consortium shall submit to Congress, and make publicly
11 available on the website of the National Institutes of
12 Health, a report on—

13 “(1) any research project involving pediatrics
14 and involving more than one Institute or Center that
15 was supported during the review period;

16 “(2) any strategic initiatives that include a sig-
17 nificant pediatric component;

18 “(3) career development awards for early-career
19 researchers focused in pediatrics, including specific
20 numbers of awards and amount of funding, made
21 during the review period;

22 “(4) details on the composition of awards for
23 early-career researchers, including demographic de-
24 tails indicating the proportion of recipients from

1 populations that have been underrepresented in pedi-
2 atric medical research; and
3 “(5) such other information as the Director of
4 NIH determines appropriate.”.

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