

OMB's Proposed Rule Threatens Childhood Cancer Research

WHY IT MATTERS

Childhood cancer is the leading cause of disease-related death among U.S. children. Progress against pediatric brain tumors, relapsed leukemias, and rare sarcomas depends on federal research funding from NIH, NCI, and NSF, awarded on scientific merit. OMB's proposed rule would replace that merit-based system with political and administrative discretion, putting active clinical trials and future breakthroughs at risk.

FOUR KEY CONCERNS

1. Peer Review Overridden Senior officials could veto discretionary grants that don't "advance the President's policy priorities," even over expert recommendation (§200.205).	2. Mid-Award Termination Active grants could be cancelled with no finding of fraud or noncompliance — disrupting multi-year clinical trials and abandoning enrolled patients (§200.340).
3. Undefined "Gold Standard Science" Grantees must comply with an undefined standard tied to Executive Order 14303, inviting arbitrary disqualification (§200.205).	4. International Collaboration Restricted Bars funding for partnerships with "covered foreign countries," cutting off consortia essential to studying rare pediatric cancers (§200.220).

WHAT WE'RE ASKING CONGRESS TO DO

- Hold oversight hearings on the rule's impact on federally funded pediatric disease research.
- Request that OMB withdraw or substantially revise the rule to preserve merit-based, expert-driven peer review.
- Support legislation codifying peer-review independence and barring mid-award termination absent misconduct or noncompliance.
- Send a formal letter to OMB Director Russell Vought requesting justification for each provision's impact on NIH and NCI grant programs.
- Meet with pediatric cancer advocacy organizations, researchers, and affected families.