

**EQUITY**

**FORWARD**

**In An Apparent Attempt To Please Anti-Abortion Activists, HHS Has Imposed New Restrictions On Research Involving Fetal Tissue**

**June 2019: HHS Imposed New Restrictions On Research Involving Fetal Tissue**

**According To Politico, HHS Imposed New Restrictions On Research That Involves Fetal Tissue Obtained From Abortion And Is Ending One Contract With The University Of California, San Francisco.** “HHS imposed new restrictions on research that involves fetal tissue obtained from abortion and is ending one contract with the University of California, San Francisco, the department announced today. The Trump administration had conducted a six-month audit of more than \$100 million in federally funded research that used fetal tissue.” [Politico Pro, 06/05/19]

**Fetal Tissue Is Necessary For Developing Vaccines And Continuing Medical Advances For Pressing Diseases That Azar Claims To Care About**

**Fetal Tissue Cultured The Rubella Vaccine, Part Of The Vaccination That Includes Protection Against Measles**

**Fetal Tissue Cultured The Rubella Vaccine, Part Of The MMR Vaccines That Protects Against Measles.** “Some childhood vaccines, including the one against rubella -- which is part of the MMR vaccine given to millions of children worldwide for measles, mumps and rubella -- is cultured in “WI-38 human diploid lung fibroblasts,” according to the U.S. Food and Drug Administration’s fact sheet on the vaccine’s ingredients.” [ABC News, 2/17/15]

**Fetal Tissue Is Being Used To Develop Medical Therapies For Zika**

**Fetal Tissue Research Has Made “Major Contributions” For “Vaccines” And Continues To Be “Necessary For Medical Advances” For The Zika Virus And Other Diseases.** “Fetal tissue research has made major contributions to the understanding of biology and the development of new medical technologies, including vaccines that have saved millions of lives. Cells from human fetal tissue were used in the development of several therapeutics in current use, as well as the ongoing production of critical vaccines (Wadman, 2017).... Below, we outline examples of how the use of fetal tissue has led to therapies that have saved lives as well as ways in which fetal tissue research continues to be necessary for medical advances. 1. Parkinson disease 2. Huntington disease 3. Blindness 4. Pregnancy 5. Zika Virus 6. HIV 7. Vaccines 8. Diabetes.” [International Society for Stem Cell Research, 2/17]

**US Scientists Are Concerned Lack Of Fetal Tissue Will “Hamper Crucial Research On The Zika Virus”** “US scientists worry that the controversy is affecting the availability of donated fetal tissue, and could thus hamper crucial research on the Zika virus. “Many fewer people are willing to donate, and it’s slowing us down,” says Susan Fisher, a stem-cell and developmental biologist at the University of California, San Francisco.” [[Nature.com, 3/30/16](#)]

**The Scientific Community Argues That Fetal Tissue Is Unique.** “There are no alternatives that can, today, serve all the same purposes as the controversial technology. ‘The consensus is that there are certain things about fetal tissue that make [it] unique,’ said Paul Knoepfler, a professor at the University of California, Davis, School of Medicine. ‘Certain experiments can really only be done on actual fetal tissue.’” [[STAT News, 12/17/18](#)]

- **It's Not As Though Scientists Started Researching Alternatives Yesterday And Just Need More Time — They've Been Trying To Do So For Decades.** “[Alternatives] are less politically controversial — in some states, it is illegal to do any research on fetal tissue, and using other kinds of tissue can make it easier for scientists to collaborate. Researchers have been working on developing tools that do not depend on fetal tissue for decades.” [[STAT News, 12/17/18](#)]

**... And An FDA Spokesperson Recently Stated That HHS Doesn't Even Know If Any Adequate Potential Alternatives Exist**

**Despite A \$20 Million Funding [Opportunity](#), HHS Doesn't Even Know If Any Potential Alternatives Exist.** “An HHS spokesperson said the review is ongoing. ‘HHS is continuing to review whether adequate alternatives exist to the use of human fetal tissue in HHS funded research and will ensure that efforts to develop such alternatives are funded and accelerated,’ spokesperson Caitlin Oakley said.” [Politico Pro, 12/10/18]

**The Trump Administration's Move Seems Like A Clear Politically Motivated Attempt To Please Its Anti-Abortion Backers**

**Researchers Have Already Said That HHS' Moves Are “Politically Motivated Censorship of Science”**

**The Scientists Whose Research Has Been Threatened By HHS Say That The Research Is “Critical” And HHS' Move To Restrict It Is “Politically Motivated Censorship of Science”** Greene, the HIV researcher, said the moves are jeopardizing critical science. “Humanized mice have been an experimental tool in modern biology for decades. It’s a routine tool we depend on and now that tool has been jerked away from us and has been really hindering the science,” Greene said. “I view this as politically motivated censorship of science.” [Politico Pro, 12/10/18]

**HHS' Moves On Fetal Tissue Research Are At The Behest Of Anti-Abortion Groups—Who Recently Expressed Outrage Over The Contract**

**45 Anti-Abortion Leaders Sent A Letter To HHS Secretary Alex Azar Expressing Outrage Over The FDA's Contract With A Fetal Tissue Procurement.** “The announcement follows the release of a letter sent earlier this month by 45 anti-abortion leaders to HHS Secretary Alex Azar, expressing outrage about the Food and Drug Administration's contract and urging him to

end government funding for fetal tissue research. In 2017, the National Institutes of Health spent roughly \$98 million on the research.” [\[STAT News, /25/18\]](#)

**Washington Post: Anti-Abortion Groups’ Influence On Pro-Life Trump Administration Crystallized With Targeting Of Fetal Tissue Research.** “Since HHS announced in late September a wide-ranging audit of the use of fetal tissue in federally funded research, groups that have long sought to outlaw its use say they are finally being heard. They view such research as morally repugnant and unnecessary because they contend other techniques can be used — an assertion many scientists reject. ‘This is a pro-life administration,’ said David Prentice, vice president and research director of the antiabortion Charlotte Lozier Institute, who said members of his group and the affiliated Susan B. Anthony List have met with Pence to press their case. ‘It’s just nice to have someone who will listen and not just close the door in your face.’” [\[Washington Post, 12/12/18\]](#)

**In November 2018, OASH Secretary Brett Giroir Sent A Letter For Rep. Mark Meadows, Stating That HHS “Seeks To End The Use Of Fetal Tissue In Taxpayer-Funded Research If It Can Find ‘Adequate Alternatives.’”** “Brett Giroir, the HHS assistant secretary of health, sent a letter to GOP Rep. Mark Meadows (N.C.) — the anti-abortion leader of the Freedom Caucus — describing the agency’s plan to move forward on alternatives to fetal tissue. The National Institutes of Health currently funds more than \$100 million in research that draws on fetal tissue. In the letter, Giroir — one of the top officials involved in the agency’s ongoing review of fetal tissue research — says that HHS is ‘fully committed to prioritizing, expanding, and accelerating efforts to develop and implement the use of these alternatives.’ He also portrays HHS as ‘pro-life and pro-science’ under the Trump administration and says the agency did too little to find alternatives to fetal tissue under previous administrations. Parts of the letter were shared with POLITICO by a source.” [\[Politico, 11/16/18\]](#)

**Giroir Portrayed HHS As “Pro-Life And Pro-Science”** “In the letter, Giroir — one of the top officials involved in the agency’s ongoing review of fetal tissue research — says that HHS is ‘fully committed to prioritizing, expanding, and accelerating efforts to develop and implement the use of these alternatives.’ He also portrays HHS as ‘pro-life and pro-science’ under the Trump administration and says the agency did too little to find alternatives to fetal tissue under previous administrations. Parts of the letter were shared with POLITICO by a source.” [\[Politico, 11/16/18\]](#)

### **HHS Secretary Azar Ordered The Review Of Fetal Tissue Research Contracts**

**According To The Assistant Secretary For Health, Secretary Azar Ordered The Review Of Fetal Tissue Research Contracts.** “Giroir said Pence did not prompt the review of fetal tissue research. HHS Secretary Alex Azar ordered it after the Food and Drug Administration contract with Advanced Bioscience came to his attention, he said. ‘To my knowledge, nobody in the White House is involved,’ Giroir said, ‘and they certainly haven’t been involved with me.’” [\[Washington Post, 12/13/18\]](#)

**Giroir: “NIH Is Currently Assessing If There Are Other NIH Intramural Research Projects That Require Procurement Of New Fetal Tissue To Determine Appropriate Next Steps To Prevent Interruption Of Research.”** “Admiral Dr. Brett Giroir, assistant secretary for health at HHS, is the official who made the verbal promise during the workshop to continue fetal research funding, according to the NIH statement. ‘When HHS began its audit in September, NIH put a pause in place for procuring new human fetal tissue within its intramural program (research

conducted by NIH investigators) until the conclusion of the audit,' the National Institutes of Health statement says. 'Research with tissue already on hand could proceed, and NIH leaders asked to be notified by intramural investigators if new procurement would be necessary. The intent was never to cause research to stop. 'NIH is currently assessing if there are other NIH intramural research projects that require procurement of new fetal tissue to determine appropriate next steps to prevent interruption of research,' the statement adds." [\[CNN, 12/20/18\]](#)

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